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PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE 9th MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 23 September 1992, at 3 p.m.

President: Mr. GANEV (Bulgaria)

later: Mr. ASKIN (Turkey)
(Vice-President)

- Address by Mr. Jaime Paz Zamora, President of the Republic of Bolivia
- Address by Mr. Valentine E. M. Strasser, Chairman of the National Provisional Ruling Council of the Republic of Sierra Leone
- General debate [9] (continued)

Statement made by

Mr. Solana Morales (Mexico)

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Address by His Excellency Mr. Hans Brunhart, Head of Government of the Principality of Liechtenstein

Statements made by

Mr. Bounkoulou (Congo)
Mr. Abdullah (Malaysia)
Mr. Ellemann-Jensen (Denmark)
Prince Mohamed Bolkiahh (Brunei Darussalam)
Mr. Nastase (Romania)

The meeting was called to order at 3.30 p.m.

ADDRESS BY MR. JAIME PAZ ZAMORA, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF BOLIVIA

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will now hear an address by the President of the Republic of Bolivia.

Mr. Jaime Paz Zamora, President of the Republic of Bolivia, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations the President of the Republic of Bolivia, His Excellency Mr. Jaime Paz Zamora, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

President PAZ ZAMORA: I first had the honour of addressing the General Assembly in September 1989, shortly after assuming the presidency of Bolivia. I anticipated then that the vertiginous changes taking place in and around us would bear the hallmark of what I termed the revolution of democracy.

Today, after all we have experienced in this brief but intense period, we can see more clearly that the growth of universal awareness among men and women has not only given democracy, as a system, a global dimension for the first time in the history of mankind, but has also meant that its power for change and its potential for transformation are clearly challenging old ideas, old structures and old habits.

I will say without fear of contradiction if I may be permitted to paraphrase what someone has said - that democracy is racing round the globe, no longer a phantasmal newcomer but rather a wind of renewal and hope.

Accordingly, what we must now surely call global democracy is shedding new light on old truths, leading us to understand better, for example, that power is, by definition, something to be shared; that we need a new and better

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understanding of the dynamics of consensus and dissent; and that the various forms of intermediation necessary for social life are now in crisis.

Indeed, the more complex the organizational processes of a particular government, as is the case in democracy, the greater the need for that power to be shared if we wish to see it adequately maintained and developed. By the same token, the more rudimentary and simple power is, as is the case in authoritarianism and dictatorship, the less evident is the necessity of sharing power.

Similarly, we can now see that the useful consensus on the basis of which the old democracies of the industrialized countries were built, with government and opposition thinking and acting virtually in the same way, seems to citizens a worn-out mechanism that hampers change. Paradoxically, at the opposite pole, in the young democracies of developing countries, the citizenry zealously calls for consensus as an essential means of uniting the nation's forces in pursuit of indispensable changes.

It would seem, then, that where the art of consensus was perfected, the need is arising to learn how to manage dissent in an appropriate way; and where dissent had become a way of life and a cause of stagnation, there is a need in turn to learn how to build consensus. This could well be described as the dynamics of consensus and dissent under democracy.

As to the forms of intermediation to be found in social life, we also see that the citizens of universal democracy are striving to reduce intermediacy, striving to take the initiative in everyday life in a more direct way. It is then that the citizen comes to regard intermediation as something of his own that is inescapable, genuine, close, efficient, transparent and representative. Therefore, we should not be surprised today to find a state

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of crisis in the political, religious, trade-union and cultural forms of intermediation, and even in that great intermediator, the State itself.

This last point is especially useful and relevant as we turn to an examination of the present state of our Organization, for, in our view, what has come to be called the crisis of the United Nations seems to be in essence nothing other than a crisis of intermediation. I say this because in fact we have always thought that the United Nations represents the most advanced mechanism of intermediation on Earth but that, in order to continue to be such, it must adapt itself to the newly emerging global scenarios of the revolution of democracy.

For nearly half a century after its inception, the United Nations played the privileged role of intermediary during the era of hegemonic blocs and the cold war. That indicated the quantity and quality of intermediation possible within that context, at the same time creating a way of sharing international power and a method of managing the dynamics of consensus and dissent, within the prevailing balance, managing in that context to determine even its own structure, organization and functioning. Under that old order, the United Nations achieved great credibility. And although in many places peace was not always preserved, the Organization achieved something that appeared impossible: prevention of a nuclear conflagration between opposing and seemingly irreconcilable blocs.

But things have changed dramatically and, with them, so must our Organization. In saying this I believe I am voicing what all of us in the Assembly are thinking. It is clear that the new world order needs new credibility, which the United Nations must earn. The citizens and nations of global democracy are placing unavoidable challenges before our Organization,

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challenges that require us to adapt its structures, modernize its machinery and identify new priorities and thus the new intermediation that is possible in terms of quantity and quality. And, with no other aim in mind than that of seeking answers, allow me to illustrate these ideas by describing a few selected developments which, in addition to being new, have the common feature of having gained global proportions, which makes them particularly deserving of the Organization's keenest attention.

The first of these is what I would describe as the dialectic of the universal and the particular, or, alternatively, the dialectic of universalisms and particularisms. I am referring to the obvious fact that peoples today are expressing two attitudes that are seemingly contradictory but are none the less part of the same dynamic.

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On the one hand they are striving for complementarity through processes of integration that are laying out ever broader geographical, political, economic and commercial areas that already constitute a new world geography. On the other hand, simultaneously and paradoxically, those same peoples and citizens are reaffirming their identity and their essence, sometimes intransigently demanding their own cultural, historic, religious, and immediate political frameworks. In an apparent contradiction, they seem to be trying to experience, simultaneously and complementarily, the great and the small, the longer-term and the immediate, the universal and the particular.

The second of these developments arises from the fact that the market economy has gained ascendancy in the same manner as democracy and, together with them, the awareness of a better life and the need for well-being and human and social development have also become global. Consequently, we face as never before the urgent need for a form of solidarity that will enable us to hit upon an appropriate relationship between the market economy, democracy, and human development. That solidarity, by emphasizing social development and, for many of our countries, in a frontal assault upon poverty, will enable us also to redefine the foundations of new social legitimacy for States, internally and internationally.

The third development has to do with something that we agreed upon at the recent Conference in Rio de Janeiro. We live in a single global ecosystem and we are all jointly responsible for its conservation and clean-up. We also agreed that little purpose would be served by preserving a world to be inhabited by an impoverished human race, which clearly implies that the ecological stewardship of the planet does not rur counter to our peoples' needs for development. Consequently, it remains for us promptly to endow the

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Commission on Sustainable Development with the resources, powers and machinery it will need to fulfil the objectives we have set for ourselves. That means implementing Agenda 21, a true plan of action for the next century, as a point of departure for offsetting the historical environmental debt we have spoken of in other forums.

The fourth development pertains to technology. In the joint deliberations the Presidents of the Ibero-American countries engaged in to mark the Quincentennial of 1492, we concluded that the final explanation for all colonial processes is to be found in a confrontation in which the winner achieves ascendancy by virtue of his technological superiority, and that this first technological defeat lies at the root of dependency and marginalization. We then agreed that in order to redress that situation it was necessary to share technological power more democratically, and that one appropriate way to do so might well be to declare as the common heritage of mankind those basic technologies that are indispensable to satisfy adequately the equally basic rights of mankind: health, nutrition, education and housing. I venture to reiterate that initiative before the Assembly with an explicit proposal by Bolivia to the international community that we should seek participatory, creative and markedly personal machinery that would become the main thrust of the work of the social summit we should now convene.

The fifth, and last, development I wish to bring to the attention of the Assembly relates to a right which is already recognized under Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of our Organization, which states that everyone has the right to

> "seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers." (resolution 217 (III), Article 19)

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Representatives will surely agree that in recent decades technology has turned information, too, into a phenomenon of equally global proportions. At the same time, the universal revolution of democracy has instilled an unprecedented awareness among citizens of their right to inform and be informed. That growing awareness is in turn linked to the observable fact that the gap now separating the well-informed citizen from the poorly informed citizen seems quantitatively and qualitatively greater, or at least equal to, that other gap separating extremes of wealth and poverty.

All of this leads us, in modern terms, to the perception that information has become the Gordian knot or, if you wish, the crossroads of human rights. Indeed, although it may appear an arbitrary simplification, the better-informed citizen eats more and better than the citizen who is not well-informed and has greater opportunities, among other things, to obtain access to better health and education. The problem becomes all the more acute when, as mentioned earlier, information today has become a phenomenon that is increasingly dependent on advanced technology and, consequently, the exercise of the right conferred by the aforementioned Article 19 of the Declaration really depends on each citizen's greater or lesser opportunity to have access to technology on an equal footing.

I believe that a matter of such great importance requires special treatment and attention on the part of our Organization. With that in mind, it seems most appropriate to suggest that serious and urgent consideration be given to the inclusion as a central focus of the World Conference on Human Rights in 1993 the topic of citizens' information. I say "citizens'" information because I am not referring to that other matter, relating more to information among nations, which came to be known as the "new international

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information order". Rather, I am referring to the citizens' right to information and to the urgent need to guarantee, in principle and in reality, equality for mankind with regard to information.

I wish to share with the Assembly my impression that, if we keep up with history in moving along this road, we will be arming mankind against what might be the most serious threat to democracy: the new authoritarianism, or, if you prefer, the great dictatorship of the twenty-first century - the perverse, systematic, sophisticated, invisible and elusive subjugation of the citizens to the distorted and monopolistic control of information technology.

Allow me now to devote a few moments of my statement to recent developments in my country. The curtain has just fallen on a period which is now gone, perhaps never to return. In my country, the signs of new times are much more visible than in other regions. Members here have themselves often expressed that judgment and often urged and encouraged the efforts of my people, who may now take pride in achievements that have impressed sceptics and enlightened those whose minds were weighed down by the weary logic of the past.

Bolivia is a nation at peace, and, collectively and individually, it is perhaps one of the safest on the continent. It has consolidated its democratic system and is making concordance the basic instrument of its political endeavours.

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On 9 July, all my country's political parties - Government and opposition, right and left - made a solemn commitment to carry forward in the coming months the basic tasks of modernizing the State and society through judicial, electoral and educational reforms, reforms in the administrative and political machinery and, finally, reforms in the Constitution itself.

How encouraging it is to have left behind the Bolivia of factionalism, one of the nightmares of the twentieth century, and to be entering the twenty-first century free of those shackles.

We have built, first, financial stability and, then, growth. To do this, it was necessary to face squarely the need to carry out the in-depth reform and modernization of the economic system. That reform stands on four foundations: stimulating competitiveness in the economy and freeing it from tariff barriers, subsidies and State protection; expanding the scope for private initiative in order to achieve the broadest citizen participation in economic growth; stimulating investment, generating employment and extending the benefits of development to the majority of Bolivians; and transforming the State into an efficient manager respectful of solidarity, and into the main party responsible for infrastructure and human development.

In this way, and based on the wisdom and capabilities of its people, Bolivia has achieved the lowest rates of inflation in South America in the last three years. At the same time, its growth rate was one of the highest in the region, and per capita income has grown systematically during my Administration.

All of this has brought us to a time of happiness and harmony. For the first time in my country's contemporary history, there are more Bolivians coming back than leaving, and more money flowing in than flowing out of

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Bolivia. Never before has so much been invested in health, education and basic sanitation, simply because we have never had as much access as we have today to concessional resources, which are coming to Bolivia thanks to the international community's confidence in the responsible way in which my country is being governed. We are building an optimistic Bolivia, a Bolivia with a future and with international stature.

While Bolivia is a country which reaches the Atlantic through the major watercourses of the Amazon and the Rio de la Plata, it is by history, geography and culture a country of the Pacific Ocean. There is no better place than this forum of peace for me to reiterate that an unjust war deprived us of the status of a maritime nation, in which our life as a republic began, and thereby turned Bolivia into a country without a seacoast. The Bolivian people will never give up its aspiration to the sea and to a sovereign and useful presence on the Pacific coast. It matters not how much effort and sacrifice may be required in pursuit of that objective.

To this end, we have laid out a strategy of peace and integration, a gradual and pragmatic strategy by which an appropriate solution to Bolivia's landlocked situation can be found that could be generally and mutually beneficial to the countries of the region. Proof of the soundness and impact of that strategy is the outcome of the Mariscal de Santa Cruz agreements signed with Peru on 24 January in the southern city of Ilo. Although not encompassing the sovereignty to which we aspired, and although not in the location which historically is rightfully ours, agreement has been reached on a commercial and industrial duty-free zone and on administration of the port by Bolivian and Peruvian entrepreneurs. Moreover, a tourism area of 5 kilometres of beach has been granted, and it has already been named "Boliviamar".

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Three years ago I described to the Assembly Bolivia's national strategy to fight the production of, trafficking in and illicit consumption of narcotics, a strategy which my Government was then beginning to implement, asking the international community for its understanding and support. In 1989 there were reasons to fear that drug trafficking might irremediably corrode the political and institutional system of Bolivia, that it might come to dominate the economy as a whole and might lead, sooner or later, to escalating violence. Although at that time there were doubts as to Bolivia's ability to carry out the plan, today I can say categorically that cocaine traffic has ceased to be a strategic risk for Bolivia.

Bolivia is proof that the struggle against drug trafficking not only is possible but can also be successful. Against the temptation to yield to discouragement and pessimism, Bolivia stands out as a symbol, as a banner of hope and optimism. We have systematically reduced the areas devoted to coca growing; we have reduced the production of paste and cocaine hydrochloride; we have taken firm action in the selection of specialized personnel, following criteria of efficiency and honesty; and we have broken up the main networks of drug trafficking in Bolivia by means of a decree-law known as the "Repentance Decree", as a result of which the leaders of these organizations are now in my country's jails.

All this was possible because we managed to avoid the imposition from outside of concepts and plans ill-suited to our national reality. On the contrary, we forged ahead with a peaceful struggle, ruling out the militarization of the struggle and spared the country from the confrontation and violence which had occurred elsewhere. In the light of this unquestionably

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positive picture, Bolivia asks the international community to redouble its efforts to reduce consumption, to control chemical precursors and to increase quantitatively and qualitatively the resources allocated to improved functioning of alternative development mechanisms, Bolivia's substantive contribution to the body of knowledge on this topic.

Above all, we ask most earnestly that the coca leaf not be confused with cocaine: the coca leaf is a good thing and is an expression of an age-old cultural tradition originating in the Andes; cocaine, by contrast, is foreign, alien, and came from outside.

From this rostrum, I pay a tribute to all the Bolivians who made possible the enormous advances we have achieved in this fight against one of the cruelest and most pernicious forms of corruption in contemporary society. I wish to express my special thanks to the self-sacrificing workers and farmers of my country.

Tomorrow, at the offices of the Interamerican Development Bank in Washington, intergovernmental meetings will begin with a view to defining the composition of the governing board of the Development Fund for Indigenous Peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean, created on the initiative of the Ibero-American countries meeting at the Guadalajara and Madrid summits.

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Bolivia, a country of original indigenous stock, like so many others of our continent, asks the international community to support this programme, which is vital for the lives of many men and women, especially as we prepare to celebrate 1993 as the International Year for the World's Indigenous People with the theme of "Indigenous people - a new partnership".

This is the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly. But for the peoples of the Americas, and in particular the Ibero-American peoples, this session marks the quincentennial of 1492. It is therefore a psychological reality for us that one chapter of history is drawing to a close and another is opening, one in which mankind will continue its tireless search, discovering and building new worlds.

That is why Bolivia, a peaceful country of the South, which is experiencing the profound challenges of development, is also concerned about the fate of the industrialized North, where, following the natural euphoria after the end of the cold war and the victory of democracy, there have been worrying signs of uncertainty, lack of confidence and pessimism. I say I am concerned about the North because, in contrast with the past, we are now all living in one global political ecosystem, where threats, risks, victories and failures have repercussions for us all.

For its part, Bolivia is prepared, together with other countries, to run the shared risk of building a new and better world. In that endeavour, there is only one requirement: that no one ignore anyone else.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly I wish to thank the President of the Republic of Bolivia for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Jaime Paz Zamora, President of the Republic of Bolivia, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.

ADDRESS BY CAPTAIN VALENTINE E. M. STRASSER, CHAIRMAN OF THE NATIONAL PROVISIONAL RULING COUNCIL OF THE REPUBLIC OF SIERRA LEONE

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Chairman of the National Provisional Ruling Council of the Republic of Sierra Leone.

Captain Valentine E. M. Strasser, Chairman of the National Provisional Ruling Council of the Republic of Sierra Leone, was escorted into the General Assembly Hall.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I have the honour to welcome to the United Nations the Chairman of the National Provisional Ruling Council of the Republic of Sierra Leone, His Excellency Captain Valentine E. M. Strasser, and to invite him to address the Assembly.

Chairman STRASSER: It is with a deep sense of humility that I ascend this rostrum and bring the greetings and best wishes of the people of Sierra Leone as we approach the close of one of the most momentous years in our recent history.

Permit me to convey to you, Sir, warm felicitations on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session. Your election is a tribute to your country and a testimony to its faith in this Organization and all that it stands for. I wish you success in the performance of your duties.

(Chairman Strasser)

The year 1992 has witnessed the accession to membership of our Organization of a record number of States, 13, thus bringing closer the attainment of the goal of universality envisaged in the Charter. To all these new Members, Sierra Leone extends a warm hand of welcome and friendship, feeling sure that together we shall cooperate in forging a new era of peace and progress and a better life for all the peoples of the world.

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Since Sierra Leone was admitted as the hundredth Member of this Organization some 30 years ago, we have come to regard this Organization as the custodian of international peace and security and as a bastion for the defence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of all States, and particularly small States such as ours. At the same time, this Organization has not failed to deploy yeoman's efforts in solving the many international problems of an economic, social, cultural, and humanitarian character which continue to plague us. In spite of all that may have been said and done, the United Nations in the course of its relatively short history has not only contributed to preventing the nightmare of a nuclear war but also made an invaluable contribution towards eliminating those other scourges that have afflicted mankind since time immemorial and continue to afflict it still.

Sierra Leone is indeed very grateful for the unstinting all-round support it has received from this Organization and its specialized agencies in confronting these problems. I wish once again to pay a tribute to all those noble men and women who in the name of the United Nations and its agencies have participated in the socio-economic development of our country, in the eradication of diseases, in caring for the needs of our children and giving help and succour to our refugees and displaced persons. Sierra Leone owes a debt of gratitude to them all.

Regrettably, the problems of poverty and underdevelopment have continued to have a direct bearing on our country. It is also a matter of regret that, despite the assistance received from this Organization over the years, Sierra Leone has not registered the necessary economic growth and development that should have brought about a fundamental and meaningful improvement in the standard of living of its people. The past 24 years have witnessed a decline in the socio-economic fabric of our nation, resulting in tremendous hardship

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and suffering for our people. Though the reasons for this are manifold and complex, in the case of our country, however, one of the principal causes has been a succession of bad Governments that conspired against our people and neglected their welfare, and that when not sharing the national wealth among themselves conspired with foreign elements to dispose of our natural resources at give-away prices, thereby depriving Sierra Leoneans of an improved standard of living and reducing them to second-class citizens in their own God-given land.

Amid this nightmarish experience, Sierra Leoneans wondered what really had gone wrong with their country, endowed as it is with rich natural and human resources alike, a country that was once referred to as the "Athens of West Africa", given its rich educational and cultural heritage. Over the last 24 years, Sierra Leone experienced such a far-reaching decline in its socio-economic fabric that the average life expectancy of Sierra Leoneans was reduced to a mere 42 years, with one in four children dying before the age of five owing to malnutrition and other diseases; with vital surgical operations carried out in constant fear of a breakdown of the electricity supply; with teachers forced frequently to withdraw their services for non-payment of salaries and trying to eke out a living other than by teaching; with the capital city itself in perennial darkness for years because the Government had failed to make provision for electricity supply. All this led to the concomitant and inexorable decline in the national production and the standard of living of our fellow countrymen.

While the external factors contributing to this decline cannot be denied, the truth of the matter is that the incompetence and malpractices of the previous Government had so permeated all facets of national life that the nation was left to drift without any sense of direction. Thus, instead of

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economic development, there was a national slide into poverty and economic malaise. It was as if the light had gone out of the nation's life with no one in charge to rekindle it.

As if that were not enough, as members are aware, last year, as a result of the civil war which had been raging in Liberia, at a time when Liberians had turned against each other, engaging themselves in an orgy of massacre, the people of Sierra Leone opened their homes and schools to them and offered them sanctuary. In order to end the killings and consequent suffering which they had to endure, and in the absence of any semblance of government in that country, the States of the sub-region, including Sierra Leone, with great reluctance and purely on humanitarian grounds, decided to send a peace-keeping force - the Economic Community Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) - to Liberia to stop the carnage and bring the fighting among the various factions to an end.

It was because Sierra Leone provided a base for the ECOMOG peace-keeping force in Liberia that Mr. Charles Taylor and his band of NPFL rebels launched a premeditated and unwarranted invasion against our country. This senseless act of revenge was also motivated by the fact that Taylor had been denied the use of our territory to infiltrate arms and ammunition to prolong the conflict in Liberia. Thus, because we allowed our country to be used to bring peace to Liberia, we now have a war imposed on us.

In the course of this act of perfidy, many innocent lives, including those of women and children, have been needlessly lost. The national economy has been laid to ruin, as no meaningful agricultural and mining activities could be undertaken in the areas of rebel activity. The cost of this imposed war for Sierra Leone and its people has been incalculable and agonizing.

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As the custodian of international peace and security, this Organization cannot sit idly by while a group of armed bandits, let loose as a result of the total breakdown of law and order in a neighbouring State, continues to engage in a campaign of terror and destabilization of the whole subregion. On behalf of the people of Sierra Leone, I strongly appeal to this body for its economic, military and diplomatic support to eliminate this cancer once and for all. If this is not done, there could be further destabilization and insecurity in the whole subregion. The Government and people of Sierra Leone expect and deserve such support, especially when facing mortal danger launched from without. We hold Charles Taylor responsible for the suffering Sierra Leoneans have had to endure as a result of his acts of murder, banditry and international lawlessness.

My country need not have been left so exposed and so unprepared for such acts of aggression, our people need not have suffered such an ordeal, if only the previous government had taken its responsibilities seriously; if only the necessary material and logistical support had been provided for the armed forces to repel such aggression. The previous regime again failed to meet this challenge.

Not only did the previous Government breach its social contract with the people and neglect their welfare, but it also failed to safeguard the territorial integrity of the nation. These factors impelled us, as patriots in the armed forces, to intervene in a bloodless takeover on 29 April this year and set up the National Provisional Ruling Council (NPRC) to save our nation from further catastrophe. Herein lies the legitimacy of our action. We intervened because we saw no way out of our affliction, no future to match the sacrifice that people had been asked to make over many years.

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In assuming s onerous a responsibility, my colleagues and I had no personal ambition o assume power for its own sake. We saw it as our patriotic duty to ake bold and forthright action to save our beloved country from the political economic, social and moral decline that had overwhelmed it. As patriots, felt we could not stand idly by and watch the total collapse of our na on. We had to act to put our country back on the road of socio-economic deve opment and to restore its moral fibre.

Ours was a ver popular move, a case of unrepentant patriotism, as evidenced by the ma s support we received then and continue to receive today. By our action, our ellow citizens have once more found strength and inspiration. Once ore, the light in them has begun to glow and the fire to be rekindled.

Notwithstandin such popular approval and the efforts we have exerted to rehabilitate and re onstruct the socio-economic fabric of our nation, let me declare from this r strum that the government of the National Ruling Provisional Council has not come to stay in power. In the several decrees and proclamations issue since we assumed management of the affairs of the nation, we made our intenti ns and objectives quite clear. They remain the same: first, to bring to n end the rebel war imposed on our country and to rehabilitate the de stated war areas; secondly, to put our country's beleaguered economy on a sound and solid foundation; thirdly, to take all measures necessary or the recovery of all financial resources lawfully belonging to the Go rnment; and finally, to relaunch the democratic process on a just, fair and asting basis.

With regard to he Liberian rebel invasion, my Government is employing all the resources at its disposal to ensure that our gallant soldiers, who are

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defending the nation at the war front, carry out their duties in the proper spirit and atmosphere. Not only are the proper logistics being provided for them, but their material welfare is being assured as well.

But alas, against a weak economy such as ours and facing an aggressor that receives armed support from a country in our continent, which sees it as its mission to carry out revolutionary warfare and create instability in the various regions of our continent and beyond in the name of revolutionary ideals, my country should not be left alone to face such foreign onslaught. Hence my plea to this Organization for the necessary military, economic and diplomatic support to repel the invaders.

The war has continued to attract attention at international gatherings. At the recent summit of Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) held at Dakar, for example, a far-reaching communiqué was adopted by the Heads of State which, among other things, gave Charles Taylor and his fellow rebels one month to fully comply with the Yamoussoukro Agreement, which includes, as an important element, the creation of a buffer zone between Liberia and Sierra Leone. Failing such compliance, all countries of the subregion would be required to impose sanctions against him and his armed bandits. We call upon the international community to lend full support to the efforts of ECOWAS and the Organization of African Unity (OAU) to bring these senseless and reckless acts of banditry to a speedy conclusion.

On the question of the rehabilitation of areas devastated by the war, my Government has adopted definitive measures that will be put into place as soon as peace returns to those areas. In this connection, a National Rehabilitation Committee has been set up to oversee this particular matter.

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It is for us a source of comfort that the international community stands ready to support us with a rehabilitation exercise as soon as the right atmosphere prevails.

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In so far as the second objective, regarding the revitalization of our sick and battered economy, is concerned, my Government has continued to be guided by the understanding reached with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. My Government has demonstrated its determination to keep the International Monetary Fund programme on course. The new 1992-1993 budget, which was recently adopted, was framed with this particular aim in view. The signs are that we shall succeed. A dynamic programme for the collection of Government taxes and dues has been launched by the Department of Finance, and weekly as well as monthly revenue returns show that effective work is now going on to harness all financial resources due the Government. The Department of Trade and the Armed Forces have taken effective steps to ensure that our basic commodities are not taken out of the country illegally, a practice which was rampant in the past.

Naturally the undertakings subscribed to by our Government have not been easy to implement in view of the weak nature of the economy and the suffering it imposes on our people. Nevertheless, the National Provisional Ruling Council Government is determined to see the programme through because of its awareness that only by succeeding in this difficult endeavour can we hope to achieve meaningful economic salvation and progress in the near future.

On the objective relating to the relaunching of the democratic process in Sierra Leone, the National Provisional Ruling Council firmly believes that a democratic system of government can operate only within certain parameters which, if absent, will abort that process sooner or later. When the National Provisional Ruling Council assumed the reins of government it also inherited an unresponsive bureaucracy which had aided and abetted the political system that had ruined the socio-economic fabric of our society. The National

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Provisional Ruling Council Government therefore found it necessary as a first step to embark on a cleaning-up exercise to provide the basis for building a sustainable democratic system. For reasons of national security, some people have had to be taken into protective custody while they are, naturally, being investigated. All such persons are being well treated and investigated in accordance with internationally accepted standards. They have been allowed access to their lawyers. The International Committee of the Red Cross and Amnesty International have been allowed to make regular visits. Recently, 18 Liberian nationals who had been detained for alleged rebel activities were released.

The various commissions of inquiry set up to investigate the detainees, among others, have remained impartial. Those found innocent will immediately be released while those with cases to answer will face an open and impartial trial.

I wish to reiterate here that the National Provisional Ruling Council Government is committed to the rule of law and to the fundamental human rights and freedoms of the individual.

As an indication of our commitment to the democratic process, the National Provisional Ruling Council has established an advisory council made up of eminent citizens from various walks of life and of proven integrity to advise the Government on the restoration of the democratic process. The principal task of that council will be to work out the modalities for returning the country to genuine multiparty democracy in the light of our national experience and within the shortest time possible.

(Chairman Strasser)

Since assuming office four months ago the National Provisional Ruling Council has brought about a completely new framework and spirit within which affairs of State and Government are conducted. In the first place, a new drive has been launched to generate total commitment, dedication and efficiency on the part of all Government and State functionaries. Sierra Leoneans generally are being made aware that they should see themselves as first-class citizens in their own country and that the potential of their country, in terms of economic and natural resources, can be harnessed to the full only by hard work, honesty and dedication on their part. We have attempted to liberate Sierra Leoneans from shame, restore their vision of what our country should be and enable every citizen to enjoy the fruits of his or her labour.

In spite of our youth we believe we have demonstrated that capacity for leadership, that concern for our nation's welfare that previous Governments had failed to provide our country in the past 24 years. The youthfulness of the National Provisional Ruling Council Government should therefore not be held against us or made a reason for not extending economic assistance to our country. After a long period of darkness and neglect, the men, women and children of Sierra Leone deserve the support of the international community.

We in Sierra Leone continue to view with dismay the unfavourable international economic environment. The continuing denial of access to a greater market share for our exports, the gradual decline in export earnings and the continuing inability to meet the target for official development assistance, not to mention the shortfall in real terms of such assistance, coupled with the high percentage of our gross domestic product diverted to debt-servicing. Each year it has been reported that the countries of

(Chairman Strasser)

sub-Saharan Africa struggle to pay about one third of the interest due on their debt of $150 billion; the rest is added to the rising mountain of debt under which the hope of the continent lies buried. The fact of the matter is that even the small portion of the interest which developing countries such as mine manage to pay is absorbing one quarter of all our export earnings and costing us each year more than our total expenditure on the health and education of our peoples. It is in the light of this that the conclusion has been drawn that all our efforts at socio-economic development will come to naught unless and until effective measures are taken to address the African debt problem, which is now an unbearable burden.

While Sierra Leone continues to welcome the various initiatives that have been proposed, including those first put forward by Prime Minister Major of the United Kingdom and since developed into the Trinidad terms, and to pay tribute to those creditor countries that considered it necessary to cancel some of our debts, it is the widely held view, after careful study, that the present initiatives cannot be even remotely effective in achieving the objective of relieving debt burdens sufficiently for African countries to have a reasonable chance of successfully achieving structural adjustment, recovery or growth in the foreseeable future. It therefore remains our firm conviction that our plea for debt relief is both compelling and humane and hence must be answered.

(Chairman Strasser)

For many developing countries - especially the least developed, like Sierra Leone - negative growth has become an all-too-familiar feature of economic performance, with three-digit inflation among its worst features. Simply put, this is not a situation that can be sustained indefinitely. Invariably, the greater the stresses many of our countries are called upon to bear, the less likely it becomes for the world economy to assume its own steady growth. While the interdependence of the global economy cannot be over-emphasized, the fact remains that in a global recession the pain is all the greater for countries such as mine.

It is primarily for this reason that we hope that the New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, adopted by the Assembly last year, will attract a much greater degree of response and support than did its predecessor, the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990. The innovative and more positive approach that the New Agenda offers should be seized by the international community to arrest and reverse the downward trend that the severity of the many economic and human crises has inflicted on African development. We cannot afford one more failure in this enterprise.

Serious as our domestic preoccupations are, we shall be remiss if we fail to see events taking place elsewhere as important. It is in this vein that we must once again register our deep concern over the bloody violence that in recent months has been visited on the people of South Africa. The massacres in Boipatong and, even more recently, in Ciskei have today become a metaphor for the struggle against apartheid - just as Soweto was decades ago. How many more lives have to be lost, how many more families must taste the bitter fruit of violence, before the South African Government realizes that the campaign of

(Chairman Strasser)

terror being waged by its agents merely increases the scepticism over its real intentions?

If the South African Government is to continue to receive the cautious approval of the international community for its agenda of political reform of its society, it must demonstrate good faith by arresting the descent into anarchy and bringing the perpetrators of the violence to justice. Denials can no longer be seen as allaying the fears of those who fervently wish to see change come by peaceful means.

Sierra Leone therefore supported the decision of the Organization of African Unity Summit to bring the matter once again before the Security Council. We welcome the decision of the Council and commend the Secretary-General for dispatching observers to South Africa. This demonstrated the international community's continued concern over South Africa, and it is our hope that the mission will help to bring a halt to the violence and will facilitate resumption of the talks aimed at a peaceful solution of the problem.

Southern Africa continues to be plagued by conflict, and the human cost is a grim reminder of how much more needs to be done to bring hope to the lives of the peoples of the subregion, especially those of Mozambique. Too many years of conflict have done little but ravage the country and leave the people with not much to hope for. Lately, with the proposed ceasefire agreement, there have been some hopeful signs. We commend the role played by various statesmen in bringing this about, and we believe that the United Nations should bring its experience to bear in this final phase of the conflict. Now that a solution to the conflict is in sight, it is our hope that the world community will increase its humanitarian assistance to Mozambique, in view of the famine that threatens the population.

(Chairman Strasser)

With preparations under way in Angola for elections leading to a national government, it is our hope that peace will once again reign in that war-torn brotherly country.

Somalia today has the makings of a great tragedy. With the raging of war, and the consequent massive outflow of refugees from that country, it is essential that the international community respond much more urgently and vigorously to this catastrophe. We cannot afford to sit by and watch the people of Somalia descend into a quagmire of death and destruction. From this tribune Sierra Leone calls on the Somali leaders to stop the war - a war that has caused so much suffering to their people - end the national suicide and embark on a process of negotiation and reconciliation. We should like to express our appreciation to the Secretary-General for bringing this tragedy to the attention of the international community.

The plight of the southern Sudanese people, though perhaps less visible and less reported, is no less tragic than that of the people of Somalia. As a result of a long-running civil war, millions of Sudanese are today languishing and facing a slow and painful death through neglect and famine and because of military siege. Given the perils and immense suffering facing them, we call on this Organization to intensify its humanitarian-assistance efforts and its efforts to find a durable solution to the civil war now going on in that brotherly country. The peoples of Somalia and Sudan require all the support of this Organization, and, indeed, of the international community as a whole, in this their hour of national tragedy.

The current Middle East negotiations have renewed our confidence that there will be peace in that volatile region. We allow ourselves to hope that in the peace talks now taking place all the parties - Israelis, Palestinians

(Chairman Strasser)

through their chosen representatives, Syrians, Jordanians and Lebanese - will work conscientiously and in good faith towards a resolution of decades of suspicion and conflict.

What the world continues to witness in the former Yugoslavia defies human comprehension. The gravity and consequences of that war are reminiscent of conduct that the world had wished was only a memory. As the war continues to unfold, we may once again be facing, in an insidious form, the dread effects of racism in the former Yugoslavia, euphemistically described as "ethnic cleansing". This time should be different. We are concerned over the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The world cannot afford to be silent over what may become yet another sad chapter in its history. The ongoing efforts to bring that conflict to a speedy conclusion and save innocent lives must be intensified. We call upon all the peoples of the former Yugoslavia - peoples we so much respected and admired - to hearken to our plea, to bury the hatchet and try to live in peace once more.

(Chairman Strasser)

In other areas of the world, the guns of war have fallen silent and peace is being given a chance. In Cambodia and Angola there is renewed expectation and hope that peace will endure. To all these peoples, we in Sierra Leone extend our best wishes and urge them not to be distracted from the path of peaceful solution upon which they have embarked.

When I started my address to the Assembly, I referred to this year as being a momentous one. Few years have been as auspicious as this one. The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held at Rio de Janeiro this year provided us with a renewed opportunity to demonstrate our respect for the environment and ensure that our efforts at socio-economic development and the elimination of poverty should not be at the expense of the environment. Hence, Sierra Leone welcomes and supports the call for sustainable development of the environment.

Also in the course of this momentous year we have observed a renewal of faith in the United Nations as mankind's best hope for peace, security and progress. Nowhere was this more visible than at the summit meeting of the Security Council held on 31 January. We saw life breathed into a dormant concept, a blueprint take shape, and the first steps of a long-delayed journey charted. For over four decades the Organization has wrestled with itself, torn between competing ideologies, becoming a helpless spectator to conflicts across the globe, paralysed with the cold-war neurosis. Our collective actions during this period seldom bore resemblance to the vision of the Charter, embracing, as they often did, more an inclination towards the veto than inspirations by altruistic considerations.

(Chairman Strasser)

Looking back, many will say we came through a crippling ritual sorely testing the Organization's capacity for promoting conflict resolution, social progress and better standards of living, while undermining our own faith in the efficacy of multilateralism. History may yet treat us kindly if we seize this sense of moment, seeing it as one more opportunity for all of us to give birth to the dream of the Charter.

As the Secretary-General observes in his report, "An Agenda for Peace":

> "The manifest desire of the membership to work together is a new source of strength in our common endeavour." (A/47/277, para. 6)

Indeed, the road ahead may be a demanding one, replete with pitfalls, challenging the emerging metamorphosis while enticing us to return to the mentality of the past. We must therefore be driven by a focused determination to broaden our horizon of cooperation, acting in a manner consistent with the Charter, thus ensuring that the peoples of the world inherit the common ends envisaged by the Charter.

In closing, I should like, on behalf of my delegation and on my own account, to pay a tribute to our Secretary-General who, since his election, has left no stone unturned in exerting himself to find peaceful solutions to the many problems facing our world today. We recall our first encounter with the Secretary-General earlier this year in Dakar during the summit meeting of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) when we came to appreciate his wise counsel, which we took to heart. He has been reported to be a man who was born to be Secretary-General. By his leadership and other qualities he has justified the confidence which we in Africa first reposed in him and which the rest of the international community later endorsed. We wish him continued success in his mission.

(Chairman Strasser)

Finally, I should like once again to appeal through you, Mr. President, to the international community for their understanding. Our intervention of 29 April was prompted by the highest of motives - the salvation of our nation. Like most of the representatives in the Assembly, we are committed to the democratic process and to the fundamental human rights of our fellow citizens. We also happen to believe in good governance, that political power must be exercised responsibly and in the interest of those for whom it is held in trust. This is our credo. We therefore appeal to the international community to give us a chance, to enable us to plot a new course for our nation and its people, to lay a solid foundation for a genuine democratic process and to put in place a realistic programme of economic recovery and survival.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Chairman of the National Provisional Ruling Council of the Republic of Sierra Leone for the statement he has just made.

Captain Valentine E. M. Strasser, Chairman of the National Provisional Ruling Council of the Republic of Sierra Leone, was escorted from the General Assembly Hall.*

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* Mr. Aksin (Turkey), Vice-President, took the Chair.

AGENDA ITEM 9 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

Mr. SOLNA MORALES (Mexico) (interpretation from Spanish): The Government of Mexio congratulates Mr. Stoyan Ganev on his election as President to guidethe work of the General Assembly. It also congratulates Mr. Boutros Boutro-Ghali on his decision to engage in active diplomacy, to initiate the changs called for in the Secretariat and to devise new ways of strengthening the rganization.

(Mr. Solana Morales, Mexico)

Mexico extends a most cordial welcome to the 13 new Member States.

The new conditions in the world, the long-standing aspirations of peoples and the pressures of all kinds facing this forty-seventh session of the General Assembly require us to chart a clear course. The disappearance of the blocs has not led to the emergence of the peaceful world of which we dreamed. Uncertainty prevails. In many societies, one political order has disappeared and the order which has taken its place is in the midst of a difficult process of shaping itself. World trends are extremely contradictory. Some countries' efforts to integrate are in contrast to the disintegration of other countries. It would appear that the potential for conflict, now free of ideological bonds, has increased in various regions of the world.

Despite the fact that bipolarity has vanished, international peace and security continue to be threatened by aggressive nationalisms, political and religious fanaticism and, above all, the conditions of critical poverty and inequality of opportunities that separate some peoples from others. As this session of the General Assembly takes place, thousands of people are continuing to die in the fratricidal wars in former Yugoslavia and other parts of the world. In Africa, the life of whole populations is threatened by hunger. The life of more than half of the world's population is dominated by unemployment and the impossibility of attaining decent levels of health, education, food and housing.

Decisive progress in economic, social and human development and root-and-branch rectification of the structural imbalances in international society are necessary conditions for genuine and lasting peace. One fifth of the world's population, 1 billion people inhabiting the most industrialized countries, consume 70 per cent of the planet's resources. In income terms,

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the polarization of inequalities is even greater. The richest fifth of the world's population accounts for 83 per cent of total income, while the poorest fifth has to make do with 1.4 per cent. Future prospects are no less tragic: the World Bank estimates that the income of the population with the fewest resources will fall from $370 a year to only $225 by the year 2000.

Now that the cold war is over, there is no argument strong enough to justify the persistence of these imbalances. Plenty and overabundance for a few cannot coexist with poverty and deprivation for the majorities. We can already see the global impact of these inequalities: The increase in migrations to the more prosperous countries is unprecedented. Millions of people throughout the world are forming legions of refugees and displaced persons. It would be a dangerous illusion for the rich societies to believe that their security is not in jeopardy from the intensification of these imbalances.

It must be recognized that it will not be possible to cure underdevelopment and the resulting poverty and marginalization in many countries by the use of market forces alone. What is needed is a major internal correction effort involving both the State and private individuals, or involving mainly the State, when private individuals are unwilling, do not know how or do not have the resources to act. A favourable international environment is also required to more effectively encourage a comprehensive solution to the serious problems of underdevelopment.

The Government of President Carlos Salinas de Gortari is promoting the expansion of markets and the need for flows of goods and services to grow without artificial barriers of a political or economic nature. We therefore already have a free trade agreement with Chile, and we have just negotiated a

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treaty to establish the North American free trade area, which will be the most potent trading zone in the world. With an open trading system, without discrimination and protectionist barriers, the developing countries could earn around $44 billion more from exports. That would undoubtedly increase the viability of the structural reforms these nations have undertaken, and would reflect international solidarity with these countries.

Mexico has been active in promoting reform of the United Nations. It has joined the consensus that there is a vital need to redistribute functions and responsibilities among its organs, increase coordination and democratize its procedures. Our Organization is overworked and underfinanced. Its renewal must include the fulfilment by all Members of their financial commitments. That there is an endemic financial crisis at the United Nations, in the face of the extensive tasks the community is seeking to assign to it, is an incongruency which must be resolved without delay.

Mexico recognizes the relevance of the Secretary-General's report entitled "An Agenda for Peace", submitted for the consideration of Member States. It is a rigorous document, and proposes the innovative measures that are needed in order to enable our Organization to respond to the challenges of a new era. The ideas that it puts before us for achieving a better balance between the principal organs of the United Nations appear to us to be on the right lines.

We need to give the General Assembly the primacy it should enjoy as the Organization's universal and pluralistic organ par excellence. We have to achieve better coordination between it and the Security Council, above all in matters of international peace and security. We agree with the strengthening of the Secretary-General's capacity for action. We consider that the

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Secretary-General should be authorized to seek advisory opinions from the International Court of Justice - on condition, of course, that the States concerned have requested his involvement.

Mexico has also indicated the need for a better balance in the treatment of the items on the international agenda. We pay too much attention to the so-called new global issues at the expense of development problems, combating extreme poverty and strengthening international cooperation. The best preventive diplomacy is one in which programmes in support of development are an essential element. These are the best guarantees of stable and lasting peace.

The economic and social sector of the Organization needs to be revitalized. Now is the time to increase the efficiency of the organs on which rests the main responsibility for economic and social activities: the Economic and Social Council and the Second and Third Committees of the Assembly.

My country has reiterated that the internal transformation of the United Nations organs, as well as of relationships between them, needs to be supplemented by the democratization of decision-making. This will entail reviewing, in due course, the anachronistic veto system. We must dispel the risk of the Security Council's becoming merely an instrument for lending the appearance of joint action to the designs of a few powerful countries. The deliberative and decision-making processes must be transparent. The tendency for the taking of decisions by consensus to become more widespread must not pose an obstacle to participation by Council members, nor must it impede in-depth debate among them.

(Mr. Solana Morales, Mexico)

Some of the measures proposed in the Secretary-General's report need to be studied thoroughly and carefully, as they might prove to be counterproductive. Deployment of troops along the borders of a State that feels threatened might aggravate the problem it was designed to forestall.

The proposal for the conduct of preventive deployment operations in conditions of national crisis gives grounds for concern. A measure of this kind could involve the Organization in issues that are strictly within the internal jurisdiction of States.

Similarly, what is known as "support for the transformation of deficient national structures and capabilities, and for the strengthening of new democratic institutions" (A/47/277, para. 59), should be examined with great care, since these matters fall within the exclusive sovereignty of States.

The report also echoes positions that Mexico has supported. We agree that States should accept the jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice. Honduras and El Salvador have set the world an example of their desire for harmony and peace by submitting their territorial dispute to the International Court for resolution.

Mexico welcomes the insistence of the Secretary-General that diplomatic action should be exhausted before use is made of the coercive measures for the maintenance of international peace and security referred to in Chapter VII of the Charter.

Despite the disquieting signs in the international environment, obvious advances have been made which enable us to look with hope to the potential of the United Nations to work towards a more stable and a more secure world. Long-drawn-out conflicts that had been deadlocked for years are today on the way to resolution. The peace process in El Salvador is perhaps the most

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successful of those in which the Organization has participated. It is up to the parties and the Organization itself to do everything in their power to ensure the implementation, within the time-frame scheduled, of the commitments entered into. Mexico appeals to the international community to provide, as soon as possible, the economic assistance promised for the cause of peace in El Salvador.

In the realm of disarmament, definite progress has been achieved in the quantitative reduction of nuclear arsenals - but we are far from having eliminated the danger of a nuclear catastrophe. There has been an increase in the number of States that possess nuclear weapons, and the doctrine of nuclear deterrence continues to serve as grounds for justifying the existence and improvement of such weapons.

In the face of these dangers, we must put an end to nuclear testing. We therefore express our gratitude to those countries that have decided to institute moratoriums. Mexico will continue to work to see to it that at this session we are able to make progress together towards the total elimination of nuclear weapons from the planet.

Therefore, the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons deserves our full attention. We are gratified at the progress in respect of the Treaty of Tlatelolco. We welcome the ratification by France of Additional Protocol I and the process leading to the full incorporation of Argentina, Brazil and Chile in the nuclear-weapon-free zone in Latin America. We hope that Cuba will also soon be incorporated into this regime, as well as Guyana and St. Kitts and Nevis.

Mention also needs to be made of the Convention on chemical weapons, the outcome of 10 years' work by the Ad Hoc Committee of the Conference on

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Disarmament. Although the Convention is undoubtedly subject to improvement, Mexico hopes that it will lead to the elimination of one of the most reprehensible means of mass destruction.

The Rio de Janeiro Conference, held last June, was a basic step towards greater awareness at the world level of the relationship between the problems of the environment and those of development. The General Assembly has the responsibility of creating institutional machinery to follow up, promote and perfect the implementation of "Agenda 21", approved at Rio. The establishment of the Commission on Sustainable Development is a central item on our agenda.

In this regard, I should like to make three points: the first is that this Commission should not confine itself to reviewing the progress made in Rio, but should become a high-level forum for updating and introducing new proposals designed to promote development and the protection of the environment.

The second point relates to its mandate of supervising and broadening the commitment with regard to financing. We shall achieve little in the struggle for sustainable development of the planet if the countries that possess the most and have contributed the most to pollution do not increase the resources allocated to halting the destruction of the environment. The Commission to be appointed by this General Assembly must ensure that it is the polluter who pays.

Finally, following up on the Rio agreements calls for a competent secretariat. We are expecting a small but high-level group with direct access to the Secretary-General and a clear mandate to avoid duplication of functions with other bodies.

(Mr. Solana Morales, Mexico)

We are living through a phase characterized by profound respect for human rights and democracy as the foundations of peace, freedom and human dignity. The defence of human rights has always been at the centre of our Organization's attention.

Nevertheless, we are concerned at the desire to focus greater attention on some aspects of human rights to the detriment of others. Only a comprehensive view of human rights can ensure that their protection will not be partial or motivated by veiled aspirations towards interference.

The Organization has the opportunity of becoming the cornerstone of a new world order worthy of that name. It is our responsibility towards future generations to bequeath to them a forum in which peace is guaranteed and in which the conditions required for the development of all nations are created.

International cooperation for development cannot be approached from one standpoint alone. We must not view it solely as a complement to actions to resolve conflicts or to reduce it to technical assistance programmes, nor can it be confined to general recommendations regarding the liberalization of trade and internal and international competitiveness.

The priorities are clear: putting an end to extreme poverty and creating the conditions in which all human beings will find real opportunities for development. To this end, a tremendous and serious effort to coordinate economic policies and the explicit will to make international law the compulsory reference point governing relations among peoples are essential.

International law is the binding force that will make it possible to build a true international order at the end of this century. Our Organization must assume with clear vision, dedication and courage world leadership in the

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defence of international law. Respect for the internal jurisdiction of States is the basis for our civilized and peaceful coexistence.

Mexico categorically rejects the claim of any State to have the right to apply its laws beyond its own frontiers. Nor can acts that violate the juridical order of another country on the pretext of ensuring respect for one's law be legal. All States must conform in their actions to the rules that have been accepted by the sovereign will of nations and agreements. This is the only lasting foundation on which to base changes in a world order that is in a state of transition.

Here in this universal forum, Mexico emphasizes its unswerving commitment to the need to strengthen international law.

ADDRESS BY MR. HANS BRUNHART, HEAD OF GOVERNMENT AND MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE PRINCIPALITY OF LIECHTENSTEIN

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Head of Government and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Principality of Liechtenstein.

Mr. Hans Brunhart, Head of Government and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Principality of Liechtenstein, was escorted to the rostrum.

The PRESIDENT: I have great pleasure in welcoming the Head of Government and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Principality of Liechtenstein, Mr. Hans Brunhart, and inviting him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. BRUNHART (Liechtenstein): Permit me to extend to you, Mr. President, our heartfelt congratulations on your election, which demonstrates Member States' conviction that you have the ability to conduct the work of this session of the General Assembly with diplomatic skill and efficiency. I assure you of the support of the delegation of Liechtenstein.

I should like to also express to your predecessor, Ambassador Samir Shihabi, our recognition of his outstanding conduct of the business of the General Assembly at its forty-sixth session.

Furthermore, I wish to take this opportunity to pay tribute to you, Mr. Secretary-General, for your efforts better to equip the United Nations to meet the new challenges it faces as a result of the far-reaching changes taking place in the world. We hope that the Organization, under your leadership and in close cooperation and agreement with Member States and other United Nations organs and bodies, will be able to continue to perform its important duties effectively. It is my hope that close cooperation will develop between you and my country.

(Mr. Brunhart, Liechtenstein)

Two years ago Liechtenstein was accepted as the one hundred and fifty-ninth member of the United Nations. This occasion was for my country the culmination of its efforts to become an equal partner in the international community of States and to share responsibility for overcoming the global and regional problems we face today.

The two years of our membership have been marked by far-reaching political changes. As one of the consequences of these changes, 20 new Members have been admitted to the United Nations since 1990. Accordingly, Liechtenstein would like particularly to welcome those countries that have become Members of the United Nations this year: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Croatia, the Republic of Moldova, San Marino, Slovenia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

Since its entry Liechtenstein has sought to be an active member of the United Nations, although as a small country our possibilities are very limited. We are thankful for the understanding Member States have shown for our special situation.

All States, whether small or large, whether powerful or powerless, need the United Nations. Small States, however, have special grounds for belonging to the world Organization. One of these is the fact that the United Nations is based on a requirement of universal respect for the law of nations; sovereignty, especially that of a small State, can be secured, ensured and guaranteed only when all States, especially the large and powerful, respect international law. We have confidence in the United Nations, but at the same time we are aware that the Organization cannot resolve all conflicts. It can, however, establish standards of conduct for the civilized behaviour of nations towards one another.

(Mr. Brunhart, Liechtenstein)

For a short time after the end of the cold war we believed that we were going through a phase of almost exclusively positive changes and upheavals. Democratic Governments were replacing authoritarian regimes, and millions of people were attaining the freedom they had long been denied. But that time was short-lived. Today the international community of States finds itself facing no fewer problems than before. Instead of a diminution, there has been a deepening of the North-South conflict; regional conflicts driven by ethnic, religious, social and cultural differences are coming to a head; and environmental damage is threatening us and future generations.

Simultaneously, however, expectations have risen and prospects improved of the United Nations being able to play more fully the role that was envisaged for it when it was established. Liberation from the burden of the big-Power confrontation has indeed made our peoples and nations clearly aware of the world's mutual interdependence, but we are still not of one mind regarding the order in which to list the problems to which the United Nations should devote its priority attention. Quite obviously, the structures of an organization founded 47 years ago need to be adapted to the realities and new demands of these greatly changed times.

We therefore welcome the Secretary-General's report, "An Agenda for Peace" (A/47/277), and see it as providing a useful basis for the efforts to improve the capacity of the United Nations to establish and maintain peace in the world. We believe that the proposals regarding preventive diplomacy in particular, contained in section III of the report, need to be looked at very closely with a view to creating means of preventing disputes or limiting their escalation.

(Mr. Brunhart, Liechtenstein)

Internal conflicts have become a special challenge to the community of States. Ethnic, social or religious disagreements often give rise to regional instability. We are aware of the fact that a number of the new States Members of the United Nations, in particular, are in an extremely difficult economic and political situation.

Liechtenstein would like in this connection to express particularly its sympathy with the victims of the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The war unleashed by the aggression of Serbia and Montenegro is causing great human suffering in that country. We are following with deep concern the continuing reports of massive and systematic violations of human rights and international humanitarian law, for which all parties to the conflict are responsible. The killing of innocent human beings and the destruction of an irreplaceable cultural heritage must stop, and all parties must immediately make efforts to bring about a peaceful solution to their difficult problems. We support the declaration of principles issued on the occasion of the London Conference, held on 26 and 27 August 1992, and the framework established by the Conference participants within which a comprehensive political solution to the crisis is to be sought. We express our hope that the political will demonstrated in London will be transformed into specific actions and that the follow-up negotiations taking place in Geneva will soon yield positive results.

It is within that framework that I should like to refer to the initiative that the Head of State of the Principality of Liechtenstein, His Serene Highness Prince Hans-Adam II, introduced in his address to the forty-sixth session of the General Assembly.

(Mr. Brunhart, Liechtenstein)

On that occasion His Serene Highness referred to the need to find ways of promoting peaceful solutions to the many conflicts which have their roots in the tensions which exist between communities within States. His Serene Highness considered that such solutions should be sought within the framework of the principle of self-determination.

Liechtenstein is aware of the consideration already given within the United Nations - and indeed within other bodies - to the principle of self-determination. We acknowledge the great international effort devoted to this question in the past.

The right to self-determination as a principle is now universally accepted. I would recall not only that self-determination is one of the foundations of the Charter but also that most States represented in the Assembly are already under certain specific legal obligations in this area by virture of Article 1 of each of the great human rights Covenants of 1966. There it is formally and with legally binding effect acknowledged that:

> "All peoples have the right of self-determination. By virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development."

Despite all this, and with some notable exceptions, the practical and peaceful application of that principle has often been lacking. Tensions between distinctive communities within States, or between such communities and the State itself, persist in many parts of the world. Regrettably, they have in a number of instances led to outbreaks of serious violence. Apart from the human suffering which ressults, such tensions and violence often affect neighbouring States, and may have a more widespread impact on the maintenance of international peace generally. Much can be done to try to limit the

(Mr. Brunhart, Liechtenstein)

suffering once the violence has started; but how much better it would be to go to the root of the problem - which is often to be found in the frustrations of distinctive comunities when they are denied the legitimate expression of their communal identities and aspirations.

I am glad to say that His Serene Highness's statement last year attracted the interest of a number of delegations. During the past year we have undertaken extensive consultations, and we have benefitted greatly from constructive suggestions which delegations have been kind enough to make. We are most grateful to all those Governments for the interest they have shown. We have also sought, and taken into account, some independent expert views.

It is against this background that Liechtenstein believes that the international community, through this Assembly, should take steps to make the right of self-determination more effective, and by doing so contribute to the avoidance of some future conflicts. It is our conviction that the time has now come for the international community, through the United Nations, to offer a realistic way forward, by establishing a practical framework through which communities can give expression to their distinctive qualities.

Such a practical framework would need to satisfy four main requirements:

First, there should be flexible and graduated forms of self-determination involving different levels of autonomy, taking account of the differing needs of differing communities and the States of which they form part; a subdivided community which allows its various parts to pursue the common goal in their own way can on occasion be a very good expression of the principle of self-determination;

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Secondly, communities invoking the principle of self-determination should renounce resort to violence and commit themselves to pursuing their aims through peaceful means only;

Thirdly, assistance in the effective realization of the principle of self-determination should be available through independent procedures; and

Fourthly, a proper balance must be maintained between self-determination and the territorial integrity of States.

Subject always to those requirements being met, we believe that the international community should recognize that self-determination is an inherent attribute of all communities which possess a distinctive social and territorial identity. This involves the free choice by each community of its political, social, economic and cultural destiny in accordance with the best interests of its members.

Self-determination, it must be stressed, is not necessarily - or even primarily - a matter of moving towards independent statehood. Indiscriminate independence would lead to the fragmentation of the international community and would insufficiently respect the territorial integrity of States. In reality, however, full independence is, if only for purely practical reasons, the least likely outcome in most cases.

Respect for diversity can be adequately reflected in other ways. Self-determination can take various forms, as may be best suited to each community's and each State's particular circumstances.

It is important to retain the essential flexibility of the concept. But in all cases where there exists a community with a sufficient degree of distinctive identity, it seems right that a certain basic level of autonomy should be acknowledged. I am referring to such very elementary matters as

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non-discrimination against the community or its members, their freedom to practice and enjoy their distinctive community characteristics, and their participation in appropriate ways in public affairs, particularly in matters directly affecting the community's interests. A commitment to acknowledge such a modest degree of autonomy for all communities that merit it should not, we believe, cause serious problems for any Member of the United Nations.

More advanced levels of autonomy will be appropriate for communities whose particular circumstances demonstrate their fitness to enjoy them. But we do not think it would be realistic for the United Nations to seek to lay down detailed mandatory requirements for the self-determination of communities with a vast range of distinctive characteristics, settled within States whose own histories are so diverse. Anything beyond the sort of basic level of autonomy to which I have referred is probably best left to be developed on an optional basis and case by case - the circumstances being so diverse that each is best left to be treated on its own merits.

Nevertheless, there would, in our view, be some advantage in the United Nations indicating the kinds of further elements which might find a place in the more advanced levels of autonomy. These further elements of autonomy would progressively add to the degree to which the community conducts its own affairs but would only be available to a community with satisfactory experience - and even then, only if the State concerned is ready to accept the community's more advanced level of autonomy.

(Mr. Brunhart, Liechtenstein)

In this complex area we cannot assume that any general principle or rocedures which might be agreed internationally will be applied without difficulty in particular cases. We should therefore also envisage that some procedures be available to assist if any difficulties arise in the application of the principle of self-determination and to assist with the peaceful resolution of any differences there might be.

(Mr. Brunhart, Liechtenstein)

A number of delegations with which we have discussed our ideas in general terms suggested that it would be advantageous for the matter - which, as well as being of great political importance, is also of considerable technical complexity - to be the subject of some further examination by a group of experts so as to facilitate the progress which may eventually be made in this Assembly.

We have accordingly concluded that the most appropriate course will be for the Government of Liechtenstein to invite each Government represented in the Assembly - and that includes those here as observers - to nominate an independent expert to attend an informal meeting of experts in Liechtenstein next March. We hope that the experts attending that meeting will be able to assist us in further developing the ideas advanced initially by His Serene Highness at the forty-sixth session of the Assembly. We envisage that the experts nominated to attend will do so in their personal capacities, since we believe that by adopting procedures which avoid committing Governments we are more likely to have a constructive and expert discussion. Invitations to nominate experts to attend the meeting will be issued during the course of the present session. In the light of the views expressed at the meeting of experts, the Government of Liechtenstein will consider how best to return to the Assembly, perhaps at its next session in 1993, with proposals for carrying further the initiative introduced last year by His Serene Highness.

As the international community makes progress, however haltingly, towards preventing the outbreak of violent conflicts between States, it becomes all the more important that together we seek ways of avoiding the no less inhuman consequences of civil wars between communities within a State. In informing

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the Assembly of the lines along which our thinking on this important and sensitive matter is developing, I hope that I may have demonstrated the depth of our concern that some way should be found of controlling one major source of much violence and human suffering in today's world.

May I express my hope that the new spirit of cooperation in the United Nations will help enable us to discharge the responsibility entrusted to us and to find, in consensus, solutions to the manifold problems that we face. My delegation is ready to make its contribution in order to achieve, in efficient cooperation with other delegations, the objectives of the United Nations.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Head of Government and Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Principality of Liechtenstein for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Hans Brunhart, Head of Government of the Principality of Liechtenstein, was escorted from the rostrum.

Mr. BOUNKOULOU (Congo) (interpretation from French): It is with a full awareness of the significant turning point reached by the world and the United Nations that the delegation of the Republic of Congo is approaching the work of this forty-seventh session of the General Assembly over which Mr. Ganev has the honour and privilege of presiding. On my own and my delegation's behalf, I should like to congratulate him on his unanimous election to the presidency. The General Assembly's choice reflects the high esteem and prestige which his country, Bulgaria, enjoys on the international scene. It is equally a tribute to his experience and personal qualities.

I also wish once again to offer our profound gratitude to his predecessor, Ambassador Samir Shihabi of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, who skilfully guided the forty-sixth session.

(Mr. Bounkoulou, Congo)

My delegation would like to ensure Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, of its full cooperation.

Lastly, I wish to extend a warm welcome to the new Members, whose admission further strengthens the universality of the United Nations. I am pleased to say that the delegation of the Republic of the Congo will be happy to work with them during the forty-seventh session and in the future.

The cold war has run its course. Upon the ruins of more than 40 years of extreme tension, States and the United Nations system are striving to organize on this planet a new, more democratic and more humane order. Under the impetus of world developments, which have galvanized the spirit of reform everywhere, the United Nations as an institution is undergoing a process of change. It has accordingly undertaken major initiatives in the realm of cooperation for development and in the realm of peace-keeping operations and the restoration of peace.

What new ideas are emerging? What are their chances of success? What risks are posed to human rights and democracy by the challenges of growing poverty, third-world debt, the AIDS pandemic, drugs, and ethnic and religious hatreds, and by ecological disasters or those that, as we approach the end of the century, result from the world population explosion?

As has been stated, the meeting held by the Security Council on 31 January 1992 was the first it had ever held at the level of Heads of State or Government. That summit symbolized the end of an era of discord that had long paralysed the United Nations. It is understandable that the international Organization should henceforth seek to define itself. It wishes to strengthen its potential in various areas, while at the same time increasing its efficacy in complying with the provisions of the Charter.

(Mr. Bounkoulou, Congo)

Africa and the developing countries are active partners in reform. For is that not part of a new universalism which has become more urgent and whose aim remains the satisfaction of fundamental needs? Let us concern ourselves as much with the flowering of dignity and human rights as with the economic and social well-being of all peoples.

For Africa in particular, external assistance stands as a basic princple. But it is also to a large extent the starting point of Africa's development. That is why Africa will remain vigilant about subtle proposals that tend to marginalize its relations with the world system. Thus, in this new interplay of interests aimed at introducing a new culture into the United Nations, Africa has everything to gain by preserving, for instance, the decisive role the United Nations plays, under the relevant provisions of the Charter, in the realm of cooperation for economic and social development.

(Mr. Bounkoulou, Congo)

In all times, the Governments that we have the honour to represent have assumed to right to lead people by assuming the duty to address forcefully the needs of the immediate present, the hypothetical, the near future, and the long-term. The first ambition remains to work for better societies that offer the citizen, both as an individual and as part of the whole, less alienation and less constraint with more knowledge and more freedom.

It is noteworthy that in the constant struggle for man and society, the community of nations assembled within the United Nations has accompanied national efforts with appropriate assistance. The General Assembly, ennobled by its solemn nature, captures the resounding echo of public opinion from around the world. In this respect, it is a major source of hope. The demands which the Organization must now meet are unprecedented in their nature. The Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, in his report on the work of the Organization, has written that:

> "The turning-point in the scale and scope of United Nations activities can be discerned after the year 1987. For the first time in many years, agreement on a wide range of issues became possible, effectively marking an end to the cold war." (A/47/1, para. 14)

Thus, today more than ever, the debate in the General Assembly is rich with a variety of issues that illustrate the expanding role of the Organization.

In actual fact, what is involved are generally new, modern challenges that the States Members of the Organization will have to confront. This state of affairs, disturbing in itself, is mitigated by the dispelling of some problems. Furthermore, a number of diverse national experiences, full of opportunity and hope, have developed in recent years and acquired real significance for freedom and restored democracy in a number of countries.

(Mr. Bounkoulou, Congo)

I once again welcome the fact that the United Nations is contributing actively to the democratization efforts of these nations, which are referred to in the report on the work of Organization that I have already mentioned. I should like to address the specific case of the institutions in my country, the Congo.

In specific terms, the Republic of the Congo is moving towards an enlarged and more participatory democracy, the blossoming of the intellectual and psychological potential of the Congolese people, and the growth of national solidarity. Decentralization, the keystone of the new policy of Professor Pascal Lissouba, the first democratically elected President of the Republic, will grant administrative powers to regions in the areas of management and economic development.

There are two dimensions involved in this: the rehabilitation or construction of administrative installations, and the promotion of initiative and innovation in the area of development and the rural environment. The aim is to improve living conditions for the poorest sectors of the population by giving them the means to gain access to decent housing, with the emphasis on local building materials, water supply and sanitation, family health, the education of infants, and income-generating activities.

In the course of this year, 1992, through the exercise of universal sufferage, the Congolese people, during successive free and fair elections performed their duties as active citizens under the supervision of international observers, to whom my Government expresses its profound gratitude for the very beneficial assistance they provided our country. The happy outcome of these elections today heralds a new era, that of democracy, to which our people is henceforth committed. Congolese public opinion, revitalized by a reborn national press, has effectively contributed to

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averting political violence. In short, the Congo is now engaged in meaningful structural reform, starting at the institutional level.

The Congo's new Constitution, adopted by referendum on 15 March 1992, during the transitional period following the national conference, increases freedoms in all areas. Almost 45 articles make up chapter II of the Constitution on rights and fundamental freedoms. Our Constitution also provides for balanced public powers and seeks to establish strengthened solidarity and equity.

The establishment of democracy at the local level - not without its risks - set the first conclusive test for the Congolese people. Local councils and mayors were elected by universal sufferage. Despite some inevitable but minor hitches, the overall system functioned in a satisfactory manner.

It is important to note the people's commitment to the new political, economic, social, and cultural foundations upon which, after 30 years of error and disarray, the new political legitimacy of our country now rests. A bicameral parliament has been elected, with predominance given to the first chamber, the National Assembly, to which the government is accountable. Its functioning reflects the meticulous Congolese electoral process.

This process culminated with the presidential election held on 2 and 16 August 1992. This final phase readily highlighted to public opinion, long unfamiliar with such things, the complex interplay of the many political parties and their strategic alliances. The presidential election was carried out in two ballots. It was hotly contested. The Congolese electors voted without constraint in secret ballot. Professor Pascal Lissouba was elected President of the Republic of the Congo.

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message of the President of the Republic, His Excellency Professor Pascal Lissouba. There are many reasons for hope nowadays. For our country, the message proclaims, there is an irresistable democratic urge that has freed energies and galvanzied enthusiasm. Everything has once more become possible.

This historic new beginning implies a break with a development fundamentally based on such factors external to our civil society as international assistance, negotiated or imposed improvement in the terms of trade, foreign investment, and the preponderant intervention of the State. The new idea is that economic development and social progress should be based principally on the sense of initiative, the creativity of individuals and the civil society, and on their capacity to act, innovate, and better manage the human resources and riches of the Congo.

As will have been noted, Congo's ambitions are bold. Mindful of the magnitude of the task before us, the President of the Republic of Congo has stated:

> "The concept of democracy nowadays may appear to be a gift. It is a culture, and any culture is a blending. Thus we, by virtue of our own culture, which involves a methodical and deliberate search for consensus, must mitigate the inhumane or hard-to-accept aspects of a democracy fashioned in other climes."

The President went on to ask: "What is law without custom?" That is why he calls for:

> "respect for the assets of the community and for the love of work. This is what it will take to win the respect of our partners, even this must necessarily rest with strengthening our links with our usual partners".

(Mr. Bounkoulou, Congo)

In this vital recovery effort, the Government of national union and the Congolese people will be able to derive the greatest possible benefit from cooperation with industrialized countries, with international organizations, including non-governmental organizations, and from the contribution of new forms of cooperation, without frontiers, between towns, regions and enterprises in the north and in the south.

Members will not be surprised to hear me speak of certain major problems that call for the attention of the international community and, hence, of the United Nations. It is quite natural that any member State might ask itself "What can be done? Where can we start?" It seems to us that the general debate is an excellent opportunity to gather together the material for a response to these questions, on the basis of proposals and of the desire of some to take action and others to refrain from taking action.

What is our attitude at this moment of great political and ideological upheaval? The Congo shares the view that it is essential that the United Nations continue to be an especially well-suited forum for the analysis of events and for concept development, particularly in respect of socio-economic problems, in a spirit of renewed partnership. Indeed, the United Nations must serve as the right institution within which to strive for global solutions. Those solutions must take into account the political, humanitarian and socio-economic dimensions of world problems. My delegation endorses this approach, particularly with respect to assistance, trade, the transfer of technnologies, commodity prices and debt relief.

There is a prevailing feeling that the United Nations has a fresh opportunity to attain the objectives of the Charter - in particular, the maintenance of peace and the restoration of peace and, it should be added

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since the summit meeting of the Security Council, the promotion of preventive diplomacy. Despite all the scepticism, Member States would be justified in keeping alive the flame that was lit on 31 January in New York. In this respect my delegation cannot but associate itself with the wise words that have already been spoken from this rostrum.

Sadly, it must be acknowledged that the end of the cold war has not put an end to age-old antagonisms. After so many promising and hopeful events, we witnessed the Yugoslav crisis break out suddenly in the heart of Europe. In Africa, in addition to the mounting violence in South Africa - violence that reflects the difficult birth pangs of a democratic, non-racial and united South Africa - the Liberian and Somalian tragedies continue to give us reason to fear the destabilization of a number of States. As representatives must be well aware, all these concerns have an impact on subregional security.

Is it still acceptable that, in a world rich in rights and freedoms, not all peoples are really receiving the benefit thereof? Continued tribal or ethnic conflicts, accompanied by war crimes, if viewed with indifference, may lead almost unnoticed to the extermination of tens of thousands of people. In Europe, people are dying in the name of ideology, and in Somalia, in the extreme eastern part of the African continent, the situation is even more tragic. Drought, combined with mindless blood-letting by clans fighting over the shreds of power, are claiming thousands of victims. There is undoubtedly a need for more international assistance. Here, once again, the activities of the United Nations deserve praise.

We should also hail the role of the non-governmental organizations in their daily endeavours in the service of the human individual, as a gesture of solidarity with mankind, regarded in its universal nature as a reasonable

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being. The picture is not an entirely gloomy one, if we can judge by the glimmers of hope coming from the talks that are under way in, for example, Liberia and the Middle East.

In the case of South Africa, all parties must agree to end the violence, and they must show restraint. The parties must cooperate in order to bring about the earliest possible resumption of the negotiation process. The developments of the last few weeks give us grounds to hope that this will, indeed, happen. In any event, the Republic of the Congo supports the initiatives and all the efforts being made by the international community to find the right solutions to these questions. It is in this spirit that, despite its difficult economic circumstances, the Congo is contributing to various operations within the United Nations framework. Recently we participated in the United Nations Angola Verification Mission (UNAVEM II), following the positive experience of our presence in UNAVEM I.

Likewise, my country supports the initiatives and decisions relating to arms reduction, the halting of nuclear tests and the endeavours intended to promote transparency in international transfers of conventional arms.

The promotion of confidence-building, peace and security is still the constant concern of many States - in particular, the States of the central African subregion. In this context, in May, the Standing Advisory Committee on Security Matters was created under the auspices of the United Nations. This is one more instrument in the system of subregional cooperation.

Although we must unite our efforts to overcome war, it is not true that the peoples that are not experiencing the turmoils of war are necessarily living in peace. A glance at a map of the world proves that the reverse is true. Africa, for example, is suffering from drought, famine and disease - an appalling picture that calls for action from the community of nations.

(Mr. Bounkoulou, Congo)

It is clear that, along with the questions of the maintenance of peace, drug abuse, the environment and humanitarian assistance, Africa is one of the five priorities of the United Nations in the 1990s. Paradoxically, however, since the adoption, on 18 December 1991, of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, the implementation of that programme, based on a new partnership, is suffering from a lack of priority. This situation requires attention.

The problems of drug abuse present another painful and devastating picture for the peoples of the continents of Europe, America and Asia. How can we successfully tackle all these challenges and others - the acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) pandemic, for example - without cooperation and solidarity between States?

There is one undeniable fact: the aspiration to democracy is now universal. This heightened awareness should be regarded as a tremendous advance that will promote peace and security in the world. For the developing countries, our thinking should now concentrate on the future and the fate of that democracy - in other words, on how to build on the achievements stemming from the advent of a democratic system in a good number of countries. In other words, democracy and development are indivisible. It is only by linking the two aspects of the question that we shall be able to derive the proper benefits from the changes that we all nowadays recognize as significant on the eve of the third millennium.

Mr. ABDULLAH (Malaysia): I should like at the outset to extend my warmest congratulations to Mr. Ganev of Bulgaria on his election as President of the General Assembly at its forth-seventh session. I am sure that with his experience and skill he will guide the Assembly to a successful conclusion.

I should like also to take this opportunity to express my deep appreciation to his predecessor, Mr. Samir S. Shahibi, who carried out his tasks with dedication and commitment. He made an invaluable contribution to the revitalization of the work of the General Assembly.

It is also a pleasure for me, on behalf of Malaysia, to extend a warm welcome to the delegations of those countries that recently joined us as Members of the United Nations.

In the last two to three years we have seen dramatic developments and changes around the world. In many ways we are at a historic point, where we must make fateful choices that will determine the future of mankind. There are opportunities to develop a new era of international cooperation based on a collective desire to seek social and economic progress in a peaceful and stable environment. There are renewed hopes in the ability of the United Nations to play a central role in the maintenance of peace and security, while at the same time being the catalyst for the revival of international develolpment cooperation.

The end of East-West rivalry and the success of the role of the United Nations in settling a number of regional disputes understandably gave rise to euphoria about a new world order. Unfortunately, events of the last two years prove that such euphoria has been rather short-lived. Numerous and complex challenges, as well as uncertainties, are still unfolding.

(Mr. Abdullah, Malaysia)

Sadly, the dawn of the new post-cold-war era is looking more and more like the old world order, characterized as it was by open conflicts based on clashes between competing nationalists and ethnic forces. Certain parts of Europe are once again becoming areas of tension and destruction, with ugly ethnic and nationalistic strife in the former Yugoslavia and a number of component States of the former Soviet Union. There are also disturbing unresolved local conflicts in other parts of the world - in Afghanistan, Liberia, Mozambique and Somalia.

Indeed, our initial hope and confidence that the end of the cold war would encourage and bring about better cooperation at the United Nations are on the wane. Experience over the last several months has raised serious concern about certain developments at the United Nations. Too much emphasis, for instance, is given to the role of the United Nations in the maintenance of international security, and there is less focus on the social and economic dimensions of peace. There is also concern over the dominant role of certain permanent members in the decision-making process in the Security Council, pushing the scope of the Council's activities into areas considered by many to be beyond its mandate.

There is also growing concern that the Security Council - particularly the permanent members - has a tendency to select when and where to apply collective measures under the Charter to uphold the rule of law and restore international peace and stability. One obvious example of such selectivity is the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Council has yet to respond to requests by a number of countries of the Organization of the Islamic Conference for an emergency meeting, with formal debate, to consider the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, much less to invoke Article 42 of

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Chapter VII of the Charter. To uphold the rule of law, the Council should reverse the aggression by Serbia-Montenegro against Bosnia and Herzegovina and should initiate legal proceedings against Serbian leaders and individuals responsible for "ethnic cleansing" and other war crimes against Bosnian Muslims and Christians.

The London Conference has yet to prove effective, and even the latest Security Council action, expanding the size and mandate of the United Nations Protection Force in Bosnia is limited to the protection of humanitarian relief. It is Malaysia's strong belief that humanitarian relief, however effective it may be, will not bring an end to aggression and atrocities, which are causing so much destruction and loss of life, as well as outflows of refugees to neighbouring countries.

The case of Bosnia and Herzegovina has highlighted the need for, and the importance and validity of, preventive diplomacy. If the United Nations is expected to play an effective role in the maintenance of international peace and security, there must be greater recourse to preventive diplomacy. Selectivity or double standards in dealing with potential conflicts and with the parties involved would lead us nowhere and would only make a mockery of the United Nations.

We are all conscious of the fact that the grave situation in Somalia was largely ignored by the Security Council until the Secretary-General took the Council to task. Millions of Somalians have been suffering for months, and many are dying by the day in a tragic civil war that is raging out of control. Somalia is in many ways a casualty of cold-war politics and is now left to struggle on its own. In this instance the United Nations must assist not only in bringing humanitarian relief - as is being done - but also in

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restoring normality. Continuation of the civil war in Somalia is of no good to any party, and we urge the warring parties to settle their conflicts speedily and peacefully for the sake of their people and country. There is a Malaysian proverb that aptly describes the futility of such a situation: "The victor becomes charcoal, and the loser the ashes."

Two international issues that have long been on the agenda of the United Nations are Palestine and South Africa. The current Middle East peace process is showing signs of progress as, for the first time, negotiation, begin to enter into substantive questions touching on the principle of land for peace. The time has come for the United Nations to be involved in confidence-building measures in the occupied territories, including the dispatch of observers, as well as the extension of social and economic assistance beyond the current limited efforts of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) to help the Palestinians during the period of transition towards self-rule and independence.

Similarly, in South Africa, the process of change towards democracy and majority rule has reached a critical impasse, which calls clearly for a more assertive and tangible United Nations role. Malaysia welcomes the decision of the Security Council to send observers to help to create confidence and to facilitate the process of change. But we believe that the United Nations should be able to do more in extending confidence-building measures - particularly in restoring law and order - as well as in looking at the needs of black South Africans living in squalid conditions, long neglected under the apartheid system.

(Mr. Abdullah, Malaysia)

On the question of Cambodia, Malaysia, being part of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the region, has a special interest in Cambodia's peace, stability and economic well-being. Bilaterally, Malaysia stands ready to join hands with its Cambodian neighbours in economic and technical cooperation. We are also fully supportive of the United Nations role in Cambodia and we are doing what we can to both assist and support the United Nations peace-keeping efforts. To date we have already contributed a total number of 1,060 men to the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC). The task before UNTAC is certainly not an easy one in facilitating the process of national reconciliation and paving the way for the setting up of a freely elected democratic Government. Actions of some Cambodian parties could well threaten the Paris peace Agreements. Clearly, the Paris Agreements must be fully implemented and the United Nations is there to ensure such a course. Also the United Nations, as represented by UNTAC on the ground, in its unique role in Cambodia, must gain the full confidence of all parties in order to facilitate implementation of the Agreements in the peace process.

The situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and in Somalia, is a serious test of the credibility of the United Nations concept of collective security. At a time when there is such enormous expectation concerning, and reliance on, the United Nations collective security system to ensure the maintenance of international peace and security, there is an urgent need to examine the Charter and functioning of the collective security system. Under Article 24 of the Charter, Members of the United Nations confer the responsibility for maintaining international peace and security on the Security Council

(Mr. Abdullah, Malaysia)

and the Council acts on their behalf. The general membership of the United Nations surely has the right to expect transparency and accountability in the work and actions of the Council. A major reform of the Council to achieve such transparency, accountability and democracy is overdue.

The Council's present membership of 15 must be increased to a level that is more representative of the United Nations general membership, which has now grown to 179 countries. The representation of Europe in the Council far outweighs the size of Europe. The present constitution of the permanent membership largely reflects the situation immediately after the end of the Second World War and has now become untenable and anachronistic. The veto power which guarantees the exclusive and dominant role of the permanent five in the Council must be examined anew. Malaysia will contribute to examining in all aspects the structures of the United Nations. We regard as timely the decision of the recent tenth non-aligned summit meeting in Jakarta to establish a high-level working group to pursue the restructuring, revitalization and democratization of the United Nations and will give it our full support.

Malaysia would also support a collective effort by the General Assembly to study the content and consequence of the extremely valuable contribution of the Secretary-General in his report "An Agenda for Peace". We hope that a collective examination in a democratic fashion will help to define clearly the important principles contained in the document and the actions contemplated as a programme of action for the United Nations in a changing world order.

(Mr. Abdullah, Malaysia)

The time has also come for us to treat the financial crisis facing the United Nations as a matter of utmost urgency if the Organization is to be the foundation and centrepoint of the post-cold-war world order. The increasing demands on the United Nations to undertake peace-keeping operations around the world are overstretching its scarce resources. Arrears for both regular and peace-keeping budgets now stand at around US$1.75 billion and they are affecting adversely the ability of the United Nations to perform its tasks. Of particular concern is the fact that more than half of the total arrears is owed by two of the five permanent members.

Malaysia, like many other developing countries, welcomes the bilateral agreements reached between the United States and Russia on nuclear-weapons reduction and arms control. As a strong proponent of a universal disarmament process within the United Nations framework, Malaysia welcomes the positive work of the Conference on Disarmament on the proposed chemical weapons Convention and we are happy to cosponsor a draft resolution on it at this session of the General Assembly. Malaysia also believes that the process of transparency and confidence-building would contribute to the general goal of disarmament and peace, and we support the idea of a United Nations register on armaments. Such a register, however, should not be limited only to the sale and transfer of conventional weapons but should also include the production and stockpiling of conventional weapons and in due course cover non-conventional weapons.

The suitability of the United Nations as the focal point for international cooperation to build a new world order is its noble objectives and universal character. For it is here that sovereign States are equal

(Mr. Abdullah, Malaysia)

partners, and hence the Organization provides a good starting point for instituting democracy in inter-State relations and multilateral diplomacy. Unfortunately, since the collapse of communism there has been an increasing tendency on the part of the victors of the ideological rivalry to dictate their values relating to human rights and democracy to others, not only in the conduct of their bilateral relations but also in their activities at the United Nations and in its bodies. Malaysia believes that a comprehensive and constructive treatment of human rights issues must certainly take into consideration the cultural and religious values that influence the national outlook and development of Member States. We look forward to participating in the World Conference on Human Rights next year.

The United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea is an important instrument for the maintenance of law and order in maritime affairs and for international cooperation. As a littoral State, Malaysia would like to draw the Assembly's attention to the use of the Straits of Malacca as a waterway for international shipping. Larger and faster vessels capable of carrying cargoes of a previously unimaginable magnitude now ply the Straits in record numbers. Most of them are expected to share the same narrow waterway with fishing boats and the ever-growing number of pleasure craft.

The increasing international traffic and the passage of large sophisticated vessels through our waters have certainly landed us with new problems, risks and responsibilities. In particular, the passage of tankers carrying dangerous and hazardous cargo adds to our worries and the risks to our environment. There have already been cases of collisions and spillage in the Straits, polluting our sea and shore and affecting our marine resources.

(Mr. Abdullah, Malaysia)

The latest collison, last weekend, between two vessels in the Straits, involving an oil tanker and a container is a glaring example. When such accidents occur we have to do the clearing up, which is a financial burden, and endure the sudden harm and destruction to our marine resources caused by pollution. This is too much for the poor littoral States to bear alone. Obviously there is an urgent need to take a fresh look at existing international maritime law and regulations applicable to the Straits and find a mechanism to share the responsibility of ensuring the safety of navigation, as well as collectively to combat the growing piracy with effective surveillance through the use of advanced equipment and with the improved resources at our disposal. To meet such objectives Malaysia is not suggesting the introduction of levies or collection of dues but is asking for the operational and financial responsibility for this to be shared equitably among the maritime nations, users of the Straits and the littoral States.

(Mr. Abdullah, Malaysia)

Any attempt at building a new world order must address the increasing inequity in the international economic system resulting in a widening North-South gap. The 1992 United Nations Development Programme human development report, for instance, in highlighting the increasingly difficult external economic environment and its adverse repercussions for developing countries, has stressed that the North must be held primarily responsible for this situation. The report pointed out that protectionism and subsidies in the developed countries resulted in a loss of $500 billion a year for the developing countries, ten times what they received in foreign assistance. The total external debt of developing countries has multiplied thirteenfold in the last two decades, from $100 billion in 1970 to around $1,350 billion in 1990.

While the deadlock in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) Uruguay Round has yet to be resolved, recent tendencies towards unilateral protectionist trade actions, the creation of new trade blocs and instability in the major currency markets would only worsen the already difficult global economic environment. Nothing short of a major reform and restructuring of the world economy, including the financial system, is required in order to bring about a strong revival and ensure its long-term stability.

In recent years some progress has been made towards revitalizing and restructuring cooperation in the economic and social fields at the United Nations. But those changes, no matter how constructive and well-meaning, are not sufficient to revive international economic cooperation and to allow for global social development for as long as the developed countries are not

(Mr. Abdullah, Malaysia)

prepared to initiate concrete changes at the policy level and to fulfil their obligations, particularly in terms of meeting the official development assistance targets.

The Rio de Janiero summit on environment and development has raised the hopes of many that we have, within the context of the decisions of the summit and the establishment of the Commission on Sustainable Development, set the framework for launching a new global partnership with a view to economic development and the protection of the environment. However, real success is dependent upon the availability of new and additional resources as well as on the transfer of technology from the North to the South. As agreed at Rio, we are expecting our partners in the North to make their pledges during this session of the General Assembly.

The world today has reached a defining moment in history. The imperatives of global interdependence require that we members of the international community work closely together in a new global cooperative spirit to move away from the past decades of ideological confrontation towards the building of a better world for all. In this regard the United Nations remains the best forum and vehicle for bringing about a new global consensus for international peace, security and development. Together, as a family of nations, we must have the vision and courage to address our common interest and future.

Mr. ELLEMANN-JENSEN (Denmark): Let me begin by congratulating the President upon his election to the presidency of the forty-seventh session of the General Assembly.

(Mr. Ellemann-Jensen, Denmark)

I wish to pay a tribute to the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali. His able and efficient leadership of the United Nations since he took office only nine months ago has impressed us all and I wish to assure him of Denmark's full support of his continuing efforts to reform and streamline the Organization.

During the past year the world Organization has become more nearly universal than ever. What in 1945 started out as an organization of 51 Member States has now become an organization consisting of 179 Members. This year 13 new States have joined the United Nations. All the new States of the former Soviet Union, as well as Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and San Marino, have now joined the Organization.

Let me take this opportunity to welcome all the new Member States and to express my hope for future fruitful cooperation in the spirit of the United Nations.

The very deplorable developments in the former Yugoslavia have demonstrated how fragile the situation is in many parts of the world in the post-cold-war era and have led to the largest refugee crisis in Europe since the Second World War. The international community has reacted with great responsibility to the intensified crisis in the former Yugoslavia and the overwhelming humanitarian needs it has caused. We have made very large resources available for monitoring, mediation and peace-keeping operations, as well as for humanitarian assistance. I welcome the enlarged role of the United Nations in the peace efforts in the area as well as the central role of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in the provision of relief, where coordination remains of paramount significance in ensuring that the relief work is carried out with maximum speed and efficiency.

(Mr. Ellemann-Jensen, Denmark)

Denmark has worked closely with the High Commissioner in providing very substantial humanitarian assistance, both financially and otherwise. Lately we have accepted a more direct involvement in the provision of accommodation and shelter for refugees and displaced persons. We intend to continue our efforts.

The Yugoslav crisis is a crisis in Europe, and Europe is willing and able to take its part of the international responsibility, but the United Nations as the international, global actor has its important role to play as well. The international Conference in London on the former Yugoslavia assembled all the main actors involved in the crisis and war in the region. The results were encouraging. The framework for the absolutely necessary political dialogue and for the negotiations was established, including the structure and the principles upon which any peaceful solution must be based.

Developments in the first month after the London conference have shown that the conference was able not only to produce very good documents but also to establish the follow-up mechanism enabling us to turn words into deeds. Denmark wholeheartedly supports the efforts in Geneva under the co-chairmanship of Mr. Cyrus Vance and Lord Owen.

Under the impact of all the combined international efforts - the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR), the European Community Monitoring Mission (ECMM), the Geneva talks - we must not forget that the main responsibility for bringing an end to the cruelties and violence lies with the conflicting parties. All the peoples, groups and minorities and their leaders must realize that the only way their communities can flourish is through a negotiated, commonly accepted political settlement of their disputes.

(Mr. Ellemann-Jensen, Denmark)

Diverging interests can coexist peacefully only through compromise. The basic principles for a political solution will not change: the inviolability of the borders which can be changed only by mutual, peaceful agreement; the human rights and the rights of minorities must be respected; the sanctions against Serbia-Montenegro will be upheld until the acts of aggression have stopped; the so-called "Federal Republic of Yugoslavia" is not the sole successor to the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia; humanitarian help to all in need shall be possible; persons who have committed crimes against international humanitarian law shall be prosecuted individually, if possible by an international court under the United Nations.

(Mr. Ellemann-Jensen, Denmark)

The situation in the former Yugoslavia is still grave, but I think we have created the foundations for a possible improvement and eventual settlement. There will be difficulties and backlashes ahead. As Prime Minister Major said at the London Conference, it will be a long haul. But nobody should doubt that Denmark, nationally as well as in its capacity as the next holder of the Presidency of the European Community, will devote all its strength to the international efforts aimed at obtaining a political, peaceful settlement in the former Yugoslavia.

After a period of impressive progress, the reform process in South Africa came to an unfortunate standstill in the middle of this year because of new, tragic outbreaks of violence. The high level of violence remains one of the major obstacles to a resumption of negotiations.

The Secretary-General took an important step by sending his Special Representative to South Africa. As a result, a number of United Nations peace observers have been deployed in violence-stricken areas. After a visit earlier this month by the Troika of European Community Foreign Ministers, the European Community has also decided to send peace observers to South Africa. In addition, European experts will support the work of the Goldstone Commission and other efforts to curb the violence in South Africa.

At the end of the day, however, only the South Africans themselves can bring about the new, democratic South Africa that we are looking forward to. We stand ready to provide our fullest support. For more than 25 years, Denmark has granted humanitarian assistance to the victims of the apartheid system, and it is prepared to initiate a programme of transitional assistance to South Africa once an interim government is in place. We encourage the international community to join in the efforts to redress the social and

(Mr. Ellemann-Jensen, Denmark)

economic imbalances in South Africa, and to contribute to the creation of a non-racial and democratic South Africa.

The tragedy in Somalia amply illustrates the need for a process of national reconciliation in that country leading to the re-establishment of a legitimate government. Following the visit to Mogadishu by the troika of European Community Foreign Ministers in early September, the European Community Foreign Ministers stressed this, as well as the particularly important role of the United Nations, in their declaration of 13 September.

In the Middle East the parties involved in the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Palestinian question have embarked on a negotiating process that gives grounds for hopes of a just, comprehensive and lasting settlement. Denmark, together with its European Community partners, fully supports, and remains committed to the peace process.

The policy adopted by the new Israeli Government has given a new impetus to this process. The subsequent response of the Arab countries and the Palestinians bodes well for the future. I sincerely hope that all parties will now engage in substantive negotiations by building incrementally on the progress achieved so far. Pragmatism is what counts at the present stage. I therefore call on all parties to translate good intentions into concrete proposals and open-mindedness.

In Iraq the Baghdad regime continues to ignore its obligations under international law by obstructing the work of United Nations inspection teams. The regime is continuing its flagrant violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms, in particular by victimizing Kurds and Arab Shiites living in the marshes. And Baghdad is actively impeding the efforts of the United Nations and non-governmental organizations to relieve the plight of

(Mr. Ellemann-Jensen, Denmark)

those suffering. The harassment of United Nations peace guards, the refusal to renew the Memorandum of Understanding and the rejection of the food-for-oil arrangements laid down in Security Council resolutions 706 (1991) and 712 (1991) are all cases in point.

Saddam Hussein's strategy, however, is doomed to failure. In no circumstances will the international community relax the United Nations sanctions imposed on the Baghdad regime unless it fully and unconditionally complies with all relevant Security Council resolutions.

In my speech last autumn I pointed out how Security Council resolution 688 (1991) might become a turning point as to the balance between the principle of national sovereignty and that of humanitarian intervention. The question of humanitarian intervention has had a considerable impact on international debate during the last year. The course of events in Somalia, the former Yugoslavia and recently, anew, in Iraq has shown the relevance and importance of the concept.

There seems to me to be growing support for the point of view that the principle of non-intervention in the internal jurisdiction of States cannot be taken as a shield behind which massive violations of human rights can be allowed to take place, especially not where the human rights situations have been characterized by the Security Council as a threat to peace. A new balance between sovereignty and international intervention is being struck, in favour of international intervention. My Government welcomes that development. We should insist on recognition of the basic principle that Governments have to cooperate fully to ensure access to all persons in need of assistance. Far too often political motives continue to prevent humanitarian assistance from entering a country or from reaching population groups in need of such assistance.

(Mr. Ellemann-Jensen, Denmark)

It has been appalling to witness the continuing disregard for humanitarian conventions shown by Iraq during the Gulf War, and, most recently, by parties to the conflict in the former Yugoslavia. The perpetrators of these criminal acts are individually responsible, and must be prosecuted individually.

In this connection I welcome the work of the International Law Commission on the question of establishing an international criminal tribunal. The Danish Government is ready to contribute constructively in these efforts during this and the coming session of the General Assembly.

The Secretary-General's report entitled "An Agenda for Peace" (A/47/277) contains a number of interesting proposals, some of which Denmark can support wholeheartedly: for example, the proposal to make wider use of good offices, the proposal to establish a reserve fund for peace-keeping operations and the proposal to make wider use of the International Court of Justice. However, both the use of the good offices of the Secretary-General and the use of the International Court depend on the political will of the parties involved.

The United Nations is facing steadily growing demands for peace-keeping efforts, and the scope of these efforts is increasing. Suffice it to mention Cambodia, Somalia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Since the United Nations is already heavily overburdened, we welcome the Secretary-General's call upon European regional organizations to carry out peace-keeping functions in accordance with Chapter VIII of the Charter, as in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Despite the substantial Danish contribution to the United Nations Protection Force, we remain committed to further contributions to United Nations peace-keeping operations, both in Europe and in other parts of the

(Mr. Ellemann-Jensen, Denmark)

world. Let me add, however, that a peace-keeping operation must be seen as an interim offer to the parties to a conflict, and thus must be limited to a few years. A peace-keeping operation must never, by the mere length of its existence, turn out to be an excuse for the parties not to seek a negotiated settlement of their dispute.

In fulfilling its mandate as the guardian of peace, the United Nations has an important role to play by contributing to social and economic development and the eradication of poverty. The significant role that the United Nations has acquired in efforts to solve political conflicts should not overshadow its responsibilities in the economic and social field. As pointed out by the Secretary-General, no lasting peace can be achieved while the existing gap between rich and poor nations persists.

The improved international political climate, the breakup of the old power blocs and the reductions in military expenditures offer a unique opportunity to promote social development.

(Mr. Ellemann-Jensen, Denmark)

We must now face our responsibility to improve living conditions for the more than one billion people living in absolute poverty, and for the even larger number of people suffering under unemployment and social insecurity. If we do not, problems will multiply and put global stability at risk.

The solutions to those problems must be based on respect for human rights, the rule of law and political institutions that are effective, accountable and enjoy democratic legitimacy. It is time to face, discuss and tackle these interlinking aspects of social development.

Denmark welcomes the proposal adopted by the Economic and Social Council to convene in 1995 a world summit for social development. We intend to propose Copenhagen as venue for the world social summit, thereby confirming Denmark's commitment to social development and our wish to make the summit an important event in the mobilization of all efforts to attain the ultimate objective - to improve the quality of life of man.

This year, the General Assembly will undertake a review of the operational activities of the United Nations system. It will give us an opportunity to assess the functioning of the development activities of the United Nations system during the past three years, and establish new guidelines and priorities for the coming three years. At the same time, discussions of fundamental reforms of the United Nations system as such have entered an important stage which gives an excellent opportunity for a comprehensive discussion of the demands of the emerging new world order as they relate to the structure and functioning of the United Nations and its Secretariat.

At the centre of the reform discussions is the need for a clearer definition of the role of the United Nations system in development activities, including better distribution of work and improved coordination among the

(Mr. Ellemann-Jensen, Denmark)

various organizations. The United Nations must also show leadership in this field and carry out its own operational activities in a consistent and coherent manner.

Progress in the discussions of reforms of the United Nations operational activities was made at the recent session of the Economic and Social Council. It is our hope that at this year's session the General Assembly will bring the process forward from the level of discussing principles to that of concrete action. The proposals contained in the Nordic United Nations project would, in our view, enable the United Nations to regain its rightful leading role in operational development activities. Only through substantial changes in the governance and financing of United Nations funds and programmes will it be possible to ensure a more effective and efficient role for the United Nations in this field, to the benefit of developing nations.

During the last few years, we have seen a succession of natural and man-made disasters of unprecedented frequency, scope and complexity. After the extraordinary events of last year, we all hoped to see a reversal of this trend in 1992. Unfortunately, such hopes have not been fulfilled.

The adoption of resolution 46/182 on emergency assistance at last year's session was seen as a major step forward in the direction of improved coordination within the United Nations system and increased efficiency in the delivery of humanitarian emergency assistance. It was an important step. However, much more needs to be done to translate the aims of that resolution into reality.

The public criticism which has been raised in many countries, including in Denmark, of the response of the United Nations system to the large-scale tragedy in Somalia is an example which makes it clear that this year the

(Mr. Ellemann-Jensen, Denmark)

General Assembly must give increased and renewed attention to the issue of improved performance by the United Nations. A determined effort must now be made to ensure that sufficient humanitarian assistance is given in time, with maximum speed, and in a well coordinated manner. We appeal in particular to the organizations of the United Nations family to try harder to cooperate, act jointly and compete less.

The World Conference on Human Rights, scheduled to take place in June next year, will provide an opportunity to review progress made in the field of human rights since the adoption of the Universal Declaration. Obstacles to further progress will be identified, and specific measures which can assist individual countries in their efforts to promote respect for human rights will be outlined.

The Danish Government is committed to ensuring a successful outcome to the Conference, and will work for a balanced result containing both political benchmarks and operational guidelines for corresponding implementation activities. In this regard, special attention should be paid to the interlinkages between democracy, human rights and development and to the need for a concentrated assistance effort in this area, based on the principle that violations of human rights are a legitimate concern of the international community.

Democracy, respect for human rights, equal status for men and women and principles of good governance play an essential role in development efforts. This has been increasingly recognized in recent years, and reflected both in the wide-ranging reforms undertaken in a number of countries and in the continued policy dialogue aimed at supporting development efforts. At the same time, the process towards broadening public participation in the decision-making processes is bound to continue.

(Mr. Ellemann-Jensen, Denmark)

The Danish Government will seek to assist countries undertaking policy reforms in establishing administrative and political structures which are conducive to development - for instance, by setting up new democratic institutions and by strengthening the rule of law.

Equally we attach great importance to the question of military spending. Excessive military spending not only reduces funds available for other purposes, but can also contribute to increased regional tensions and violations of international law, and can in some cases compromise moves towards democracy and the rule of law at the domestic level.

Denmark stands ready, through its programme for development assistance, to provide substantial support for specific activities aimed at consolidating human rights, democracy and good governance, and we shall seek our future partners in development from amongst countries which are making a genuine effort in this regard.

Next year has also been designated the International Year of the World's Indigenous People. The Danish Government looks forward with great interest and high hopes to that Year, and plans are well under way both in Greenland and in Denmark on how to work actively towards increasing the understanding of the special situation facing these peoples and how to further the respect for the cultures and rights of indigenous peoples.

It is well known that the Inuit, the inhabitants of Greenland, have chosen the status of home rule within the Danish realm, and at the domestic level we will cooperate closely with the representatives of the home-rule Government of Greenland in our preparations for the Year.

The results the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development recently achieved in Rio provide a good basis for a new global partnership

(Mr. Ellemann-Jensen, Denmark)

based on common responsibility for the Earth, even if it did not meet all our expectations. The Rio Declaration, Agenda 21 and the Conventions on climate change and biodiversity are far from being the end result: they are instruments to mobilize governments and peoples from all over the world in a joint effort towards sustainable development in the future.

The most significant institutional recommendation of the Conference to be followed up at the international level is the high-level Commission on Sustainable Development. It is important that the Commission's scope of work be oriented towards the future in order to ensure a dynamic approach to future technological and economic developments.

(Mr. Ellemann-Jensen, Denmark)

Implementation of Agenda 21 and the conventions requires financial resources and thus calls for partnership and real burden-sharing among nations, not only between North and South but also among the donor countries themselves.

From the very beginning, the Danish Government has been committed to the process of the United Nations Conference and Environment and Development. We are prepared to provide our fair share of the necessary resources, and would like to see similar firm commitments from as many countries as possible.

At this session we are marking the end of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons. The disabled remain among the most vulnerable groups, in particular in the developing countries. During the Decade awareness of the problems and difficulties facing disabled persons all over the world has been increased. Much however, still remains to be done. The development organizations of the United Nations should play an important role in this respect by integrating the needs of disabled persons more strategically in the regular programming of their activities.

Let me end by stating the obvious: we all wish the United Nations success in the reform process and in carrying out its many tasks. But that wish must be accompanied by a willingness to live up to our legal obligation to pay our contributions to the Organization and to do so in full and on time.

Prince Mohamed BOLKIAH (Brunei Darussalam): I congratulate His Excellency Mr. Ganev on his election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session. I am sure he will guide us well.

(Prince Mohamed Bolkiah, Brunei Darussalam)

I should like also to thank the outgoing President, His Excellency Mr. Samir Shihabi. His valuable contribution to the work of the United Nations was much appreciated.

I wish also to thank the Secretary-General for his efforts on behalf of peace in the world. His report, "An Agenda for Peace", should be given urgent attention by Member countries. I offer the Secretary-General my continued support in all his demanding work.

This year, we are very pleased to greet the new Members of the United Nations. Their admission should further strengthen our Organization.

Since last year's session we have continued to see great changes in the world. Brunei Darussalam welcomed most of them. However, we have approached others with caution. This is because we are not yet sure what they will lead to. Generally, though, we feel that the Members of the world body are now in a better position than ever before to build a just and lasting peace in the world.

However, we believe that certain things must be in place before any United Nations action can have a good chance of success. These are strong bilateral relationships between individual countries which lead to multilateral cooperation through regional associations. We feel that these two structures are essential. It is our view that, if they exist, the United Nations will be able to function well in terms of both peace-keeping and peace-building. We think they are required because no one nation or single organization is able to stand alone.

(Prince Mohamed Bolkiah, Brunei Darussalam)

That is why my country, like many others, has been engaged in intense diplomatic activity over the past year. We feel we have to establish a wide range of bilateral relations and participate fully in regional and international organizations. We think that, in this way, even small nations such as ours can contribute a great deal to the success of this Organization. We would like to see United Nations action complementing regional and international institutions.

I feel that this is illustrated by the part the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) has played in finding a solution to the Cambodian problem. ASEAN's hard work and patience in the initial stages was crucial. So were the efforts of other concerned and interested parties. Also, the willingness of the Cambodians themselves to seek a peaceful solution was a most significant factor. The peace accord sponsored by the United Nations was built on this foundation.

The situation in Cambodia today may offer a further illustration. We believe it shows that peace-building does not necessarily end when an agreement is signed. The effort must still go on. A continuing spirit of cooperation among all parties to any international settlement must be encouraged.

We, therefore, see reasons for optimism in our own part of the world. But we do not overlook realities elsewhere. We are glad to note that, even in some very difficult situations, individual countries are trying to play their part in bringing peace and stability to their regions.

(Prince Mohamed Bolkiah,
Brunei Darussalam)

We are particularly glad to see this happening in the Middle East. The peace talks sponsored by the United States and Russia are providing the countries concerned with the means to make peaceful progress. Certainly, the core problem of Palestine has not yet been resolved, and we regret that the Israelis still defy Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). But in spite of all this, we see some progress. For this reason, we urge everyone involved to try to make the talks succeed. At the same time, we feel that the United Nations still has an important role to play in the search for a solution.

We believe that the world body should increase its effort to help bring about peaceful change in South Africa. This would strengthen the considerable efforts made by institutions such as the Commonwealth and the Organization of African Unity.

In our opinion, there are sound reasons for the United Nations to be involved in Cambodia, the Middle East and South Africa. This is because certain favourable conditions have been created by those directly involved.

Unfortunately, this cannot always be the case. The situation in the Balkans seems likely to be typical of the dilemmas the world body may be forced to face in the future. On the one hand, there is a need to act because of our moral and human obligations. On the other hand, there may be no framework of good sense, reason and peaceful intent established at all levels. Calls for United Nations action in similar circumstances may multiply.

(Prince Mohamed Bolkiah, Brunei Darussalam)

That is why I do not feel we can consider peace and security only in their political context. We see them as closely linked with economic development. Here I refer to the grave social and economic problems faced by a great number of developing nations. They pose a considerable threat to those countries' internal security and, therefore, to international stability.

If present conditions continue, developing countries will be in no position to undertake peaceful cooperation. This could mean that the United Nations is called upon time and again to try to solve local conflicts under very difficult circumstances.

We therefore think it is vital that developing and developed countries engage in peace-building together. We feel there is an urgent need to provide the building blocks of international peace today. These take the form of cooperative international trading relations.

In my view, the first test we all face is whether we can bring about a successful conclusion to the current Uruguay Round. Other things should then fall into place, such as open markets and the free transfer of modern technology to developing nations.

Those seem to me to be the most practical ways in which we all can engage in preventive diplomacy. They will ensure that the primary role of the United Nations is not only to solve political crises but also to help individual nations and regions build their own peace in their own way.

Mr. NASTASE (Romania): I would like first to join previous speakers in extending to Ambassador Ganev my warm congratulations on his election. It gives me particular pleasure to see the representative of one of the new European democracies, which is also a friendly neighbour of Romania, heading such an important session.

I should like also to pay tribute to the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, whose tireless endeavours to catalyze our common efforts aiming at conferring on the United Nations a new role attuned to a changing world enjoy my country's full support.

Within a few days, we in Romania are going to experience a historic moment in the post-revolutionary history of our country. On 27 September, parliamentary and presidential elections - the first since the adoption of our new democratic Constitution - will take place. We see them as a landmark for a country whose firm choice of political pluralism, the rule of law, democracy and a market economy has, for the most part, been undeservedly doubted. I want to inform the Assembly that the Romanian Government has done its best to ensure a fair electoral campaign, and free and fair elections. In turn, the presence of thousands of domestic and numerous foreign observers is a solid guarantee of this.

It is not my intention to speak here and now about the heavy tolls the Romanian people has already paid on the road to a reform process able to strike a feasible balance between legitimate aspirations and the scarcity of the economic resources needed to meet them. But I feel entitled to say that the incidental lapses that have sometimes seemed to jeopardize the steady course of transition stemmed not from attempts to look back but rather from a certain eagerness to step into the future one day sooner.

(Mr. Nastase, Romania)

Like all the other new Central European democracies, Romania is undergoing a test that has no historical precedent, namely simultaneously to create new political structures and new, workable economic mechanisms. However, as our Prime Minister recently said, we have already saved ourselves from five years of perestroika. And we must keep on forging forward while, paradoxically, we are still searching for gradualism. Moreover, there is no sign that someone has an ideal, fool-proof blueprint for the changes we are striving for. Thank God, it seems that Romania has already left behind most of its childhood diseases. Considering that the saying "the sooner the better" goes for measles too, we might prove in the long run to have been among the lucky ones in post-Communist Europe.

To cite just one example, I would recall that in the past year allegations concerning so-called Romanian anti-semitism have been frequently voiced. Now, that it has become clear that they were groundless, it is our turn to be concerned that in neighboring countries and other Central European countries, xenophobic, racist and anti-semitic trends have emerged.

The crux of the matter for our country and for other countries in transition is to strengthen the learning capacity of society. We have no comfortable dogmas or patterns to follow. We are courageously taking risks. The whole process of reform has already reached the point of no return: another reason why countries in transition should not be left alone, the more so because, in a certain sense, not only post-Communist Europe but the world as a whole is in transition.

(Mr. Nastase, Romania)

The economic, moral and political investments Romania has enjoyed during the last year have already proved that our message has been perfectly understood by most of our potential partners. I make no secret that such investments of confidence have followed an ascending curve, one corresponding both to the growing domestic stability of Romania and our ever increasing international confirmation as a reliable pillar of Central European and continental security.

Such a positive judgement on the last year's developments in Romania is convincingly supported by a series of parallel achievements in our domestic and our foreign policy. Let me mention just a few of our domestic achievements: the setting up of a new legislative and institutional framework able to guarantee the rule of law, political pluralism, free and fair elections, transition to a market economy and full respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms; the adoption by the Parliament elected in May 1990 of the new Constitution approved by national referendum on 8 December 1991; and the fact that, according to our fundamental law, the State recognizes and guarantees to persons belonging to national minorities the right to preserve, develop and express their cultural, linguistic and religious identity, to which one can add a particular feature of Romania's Constitution, whose article 20 states that

> "constitutional provisions concerning the citizens' rights and liberties shall be interpreted and enforced in conformity with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and with the covenants and other treaties to which Romania is a party"

(Mr. Nastase, Romania)

and that

"where any inconsistencies exist between the covenants and treaties on fundamental human rights to which Romania is a party and domestic laws, the international regulations shall take precedence".

Another achievement is the local elections held in February 1992, confirmed as fair and free by their main outcome: by the fact that the opposition parties won an important number of seats everywhere in the country. As a result, Romanian society enjoys more balanced political representation, clearly contradicting allegations pointing to the danger of "monolithism" in Romania. The fairness of the elections was confirmed also in the conclusions drawn by the foreign observers who witnessed the ballot. The country qualifies to be called pluralistic and democratic.

(Mr. Nastase, Romania)

The unfolding of the current election campaign brings new proof that political pluralism, the rule of law, free access to the media, and freedom of speech are becoming normal facts of life in today's Romania. All of these are promises that they will greatly contribute to the strengthening of both the institutional framework and its functioning, thereby irreversibly including Romania in the family of stable and democratic States.

Through adequate legislation, the building-up of economic and financial market mechanisms, the privatization of the land, industry, trade, services and tourism, Romania has succeeded in breaking away from the command economy and in becoming more and more attractive to foreign investors. Romania is now in its third year of transition. It has laid the foundations of a market economy and is ready to begin structural reform. As part of the reform, the Romanian Government adopted an economic stabilization programme supported by a stand-by loan from the International Monetary Fund. The programme lays stress on classical anti-inflationary measures and, at the same time, has specific elements conditioned by the need to create a market mechanism.

As a matter of principle, Romania aims at developing normal relations of cooperation with all States, and in particular with its neighbours. The foreign policy of our Government is inspired by the political will to create the necessary conditions leading to Romania's irreversible anchorage within the Euro-Atlantic space and its viable institutions, and, respectively, to increase the country's contribution to the building-up of the Euro-Atlantic community of values and of a new continental security order. In this spirit, Romania entered into negotiations on an association agreement with the European Communities that is about to be concluded, and a cooperation agreement with the European Free Trade Association. At the same time, like the other Central European countries, Romania entered into a special

(Mr. Nastase, Romania)

relationship with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and attaches particular importance to its participation as a partner in the North-Atlantic Co-operation Council.

The efforts to restore and consolidate democracy in Romania cannot and should not be isolated from the international environment in which we are living. Our major concern about the situation in Yugoslavia has been made manifest in many circumstances. Being in the unique position in this area of having never waged a fighting war against any of the peoples of the former Yugoslavia, Romania is its only neighbour whose perception and attitude are in no way biased by territorial or other interests of any kind. As a State providing full evidence of balanced conduct and good relations with all the Yugoslav republics, Romania can afford to take a neutral stand on any related matter and is determined to contribute further to the efforts of the international community to restore peace and stability in Yugoslavia.

As participants in the London Conference on Yugoslavia, we have stressed that a peaceful settlement is the only acceptable alternative for all the parties to the conflict. Despite the evolution of the conflict in the aftermath of the London Conference, we still believe that the relevant action programme adopted there is comprehensive and realistic, although peace may not be achieved overnight.

The concerted efforts of the United Nations and the European Community, supported by all the participants in the Conference, including Romania - which is the first non-Community neighbouring country represented in the Steering Committee - should not ignore the fact that the specific patchwork of Yugoslavia has always challenged conventional wisdom. Now it also challenges the application of the basic concepts of international law. There cannot be a

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separate international law for Yugoslavia. Although the conditions are historically and psychologically peculiar, international law is the same for all.

We may think of arrangements adapted to the specific situation and acceptable to the parties concerned. Whatever their contents, they will remain what they are - one-time solutions that do not create international law. Given that Romania's initiative in asking for international monitoring of the observance of the embargo along our Danubian frontier with former Yugoslavia has been confirmed as a positive example to be followed by other neighbors, I shall not dwell at length on this matter. But I cannot help underlining that the costly consequences of my country's scrupulous compliance with the resolutions of the Security Council on Yugoslavia have triggered legitimate concerns among the population of the country. It fears that, as in the case of the Gulf War, Romania could again economically and financially pay more than it can afford for being a law-abiding member of the international community.

That is why we would suggest that the Security Council devise a set of measures involving the financial institutions and other components of the United Nations system that can help States to meet the economic difficulties entailed by compliance with the regime of sanctions. We envisage a standing compensation fund to be administered by the Security Council in order to alleviate, if not fully compensate for, the economic losses of countries particularly stricken by embargoes and other sanctions established by the Security Council. We are in the process of working out a more detailed proposal to this effect, which we are going to submit to the United Nations community for consideration. The existence of such a fund would be a way of encouraging States to cooperate with the Council in situations of crisis management.

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In the case of the conflict in the eastern part of the Republic of Moldova, we are seeing a sort of "pacification" that is, in fact, proving to be a kind of blackmail for the independence and territorial integrity of that State. It is precisely the same army that generated the conflict and gave arms and other support to separatist forces that today is performing the role of "peacekeeper". This pattern has been resorted to in other newly independent States as well. We sometimes ask ourselves if the independence of all these former Soviet republics is taken seriously by the international community or whether it is only a smoke screen behind which a new imperial structure is taking shape.

In any case, we in Romania take it seriously. We cannot remain indifferent when we see tendencies to remake the old empire, into which Moldova was forcibly incorporated as a result of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact. Our interest in the independence and democratic development of a State where 65 per cent of the population is Romanian is natural. We are concerned that a wise propensity for compromise from the Moldovan leaders was rewarded with a policy of fait accompli aimed at institutionalizing the separation of the Trans-Dniestr region from the Republic of Moldova. The evolution of the conflict in the Republic of Moldova, taken in conjunction with the conflicts generated elsewhere in the newly independent States, shows that nostalgia for the former empire exists and has painful consequences for the peoples that have gained their freedom at so high a cost.

It is the common wisdom that the United Nations remains a major actor in the whole process of world change and a flag-bearer of undisputable authority. In this respect, the new lease on life given to preventive diplomacy is crucial. An encouraging and valuable political consensus on this issue was expressed during the summit-level Security Council meeting held on

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31 January 1992. The report of the Secretary-General "An Agenda for Peace" includes a set of inspired guidelines which, once adopted and implemented, would bring us closer to the ideals the United Nations pursues in a world of turbulence. At the same time, we have to be mindful that we are contemplating a long-lasting framework and that there is therefore a need to avoid ephemeral solutions and mechanisms inspired by specific and temporary conflicts or influenced by emotional or short-view approaches.

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Given the tragic situation in Yugoslavia and other lessons drawn from recent history, we must also forgo hasty generalizations and biased views. Wisdom and patience, an even-handed attitude, and the spirit of compromise are the necessary basic ingredients for any settlement involving the destiny of peoples. In this respect, we wholeheartedly endorse the pertinent remarks of the Secretary-General, who says in his report that, if every ethnic, religious or linguistic group claimed statehood, there would be no limit to fragmentation, and peace, security and economic well-being for all would become ever more difficult to achieve.

Yet, we would find it extremely useful if the General Assembly were to analyse more thoroughly the concept of the self-determination of peoples in order to prevent any distortion of this specific concept in the sense of extrapolating it to the case of national minorities. Generally speaking, we should try to avoid a risky tendency towards a "proliferation of principles". Of course, some might be tempted to say that the current turmoils in different parts of the world are living proof that the principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter are out of date or at least incomplete. We share the view with the great majority of United Nations Member States that it is not the principles that are wanting but the way they are put into practice. Disregard or breaches of international law favour conflicts and not a so-called "scarcity" of principles.

The year 1992 is a milestone year for cooperative measures aimed at arms control and disarmament, transparency and confidence, strengthening action-oriented dialogue, and cooperation on security issues. The Romanian Government welcomes the conclusion of the Convention on the destruction and prohibition of chemical weapons and is ready to sign the Convention in

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January 1993 in Paris. We regard this Convention as a genuine pillar of international security.

At the same time, the set of major agreements that were signed or that entered into force this year at the European level - the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe, the Vienna Document, the Helsinki Final Act on Conventional Armed Forces, and the Open Skies Treaty - have laid the foundation for lasting cooperation and stability on the Continent. The opening in Vienna, this very week, of the Forum for Security Cooperation launches a further stage of the dialogue among the participating States of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) in their joint endeavour for increased security and stability for each and every country in the Euro-Atlantic area. In addition, particular mention should be made of the historical processes within both the North Atlantic Cooperation Council and the partnership established among the Western European Union (WEU) member States and the eight countries of Central Europe, including Romania.

Thus, step by step, the basic components of a new security order in Europe are taking shape, taking into account the structural transformations on the European continent. In fact, today the security of any country in the European sphere cannot be conceived but as a result of harmonious interaction between the United Nations, CSCE, NATO and WEU, and also of increased efforts at the subregional level.

We welcome the decisions to convene the World Conference on Human Rights in 1993 and a world summit on social development in 1995. In our opinion, the 1993 World Conference should represent an important occasion for putting a final stop to the tendencies to politicize minority issues by taking them out of their natural framework - the framework of human rights - a framework which offers the best and the only viable answers to concerns connected to

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guaranteeing and respecting the legitimate rights of persons belonging to national minorities and to the protection of ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identity.

The health of the world community vitally depends on the health of our planet itself. The Rio Conference proved that mankind is ready to forge a new partnership for promoting sustainable development - the key concept to safeguarding human civilization. Romania is ready to put its shoulder to the wheel with a view to alleviating as soon as possible the actual threats to the health of our planet and to the wealth of the world community.

Seeing in this audience representantives of such a great family of nations, we realize the immense potential that good will and determination can offer to the genuine universality of the world Organization. I am happy to welcome all new States Members of the United Nations and to extend to all of them the best wishes of my Government and the Romanian people. May I address our congratulations to the representatives of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Republic of Moldova, San Marino, Slovenia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. I am confident that the authoritative voice of the United Nations will be a source for action-oriented measures for the sake and well-being of all nations.

Romania, as a democratic country fully attached to the ideals embodied in the United Nations Charter, in making its own contribution to the achievement of mankind's aspirations and to the vital answers we are expected to give to the challenges of the forthcoming century, in which international cooperation should be governed by law. For its cogency with the objectives of the current United Nations Decade of International Law, I would like to recall the

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prophetic words of a great Romanian diplomat, Nicolae Titulescu, who, 55 years ago, stated:

"Only when the law shines like the rising Sun in the soul of all men as a guiding spirit, an imperative requirement, and a self-imposed obligation that is one with organized freedom - only then will Mankind have been saved."

The meeting rose at 7.40 p.m.